

# EUROPEAN WOMEN IN INDIA THEIR LIFE & ADVENTURES.

**H.S. BHATIA**





## The Book

Of all the civilisations which have come to India so far, the Western manners, culture and institutions have affected the Indian scene most. What part the European, especially the English women, with their Western life-style, have played in bringing this change in the Indian society is an important subject worth close study.

The Europeans came for trade but stayed to rule. In the beginning they married native women and kept *Zenana*. The European women on arrival in India not only reversed the 'Indianisation' of the European settlers and completely weaned away their men from things Indian but with their charms and superior social and political status 'Westernised' a number of Indians.

When the Indian woman was considered a complete inferior species, inferior to the male in all respects, the European women brought and exhibited in India their lordliness, customs and fashions of an advanced society i.e. ballroom dancing, drinking, co-education, riding, hunting and open mixing of members of both sexes. It imperceptibly but significantly contributed towards evolution of the modern Indian woman.

This book provides a fascinating historical account of the life-style of European, especially English women, who came to India in search of wealthy husbands, for 'adventure and experience' or to share Whiteman's burden. Their gay times and daring adventures, follies and foibles, sufferings and vicissitudes, leisurely and romantic pastimes, prejudices and superiority complex, self-reliance and heroic deeds and achievements and selfless services have been brought to life in these pages.

When the British *Raj* came to an end in August 1947, the English women also departed but they have left behind a notable imprint on the Indian society.

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IN INDIA  
Their Life and Adventures



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J. S. Phartia  
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# EUROPEAN WOMEN IN INDIA

## Their Life and Adventures

*Edited by*  
H. S. BHATIA



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## Key to Important Terms

**Anglo-Indian**—A modern name for persons of mixed European and Indian blood. The term was adopted by the European and Anglo-Indian Defence Association in 1883. Earlier such persons were known as Half-Castes, East Indians or Eurasians; Mesticos (Portuguese) Mesticks (Dutch); Metif (French).

**Arrack**—A strong drink or distilled spirit.

**Baboo**—An appellation given to a rich native, or anyone for whom the British rulers wished to show respect; Natives who lent money to the young writers.

**Bakhshish**—A gift, tip or bribe.

**Barracks**—A building or a group of buildings used as living quarters for military personnel.

**Bazar**—A market.

**Civilian**—A term which came into use in the 1760's as a designation of the covenanted European servants of the East India Company, and was later appropriated to describe the Indian Civil Servants. The members of the Company's Civil Service were classified for the first five years as writers, then as factors, then in the 9th year as junior merchants and thereafter as senior merchants. These names emerged from the early commercial character of the Company's transactions, and were abolished in 1833.

**Collector**—Chief British administrative officer of an Indian district or zila, especially charged with the collection of revenue and with magisterial powers. First introduced by Warren Hastings.

**Company**—The East India Company; in the army a body of



men generally about 100 forming one of the units of the battalion composed of ten companies.

**Factory**—A trading establishment or warehouse of the East India Company.

**Firinghee**—A term for a European when used in a hostile or disparaging manner.

**Gentoo**—A Hindu in contradistinction from the Muslims; a native of India.

**Griffin**—One newly arrived in India and unaccustomed to Indian ways and peculiarities ; A Johnny Newcome.

**Gulam**—A slave.

**I.C.S.**—The Indian Civil Service, which in 1858 succeeded the Company's covenanted service. It formed the main administrative service in India.

**Mem Sahib**—The usual designation of a European married lady in North India; Madam Sahib in Bombay; Doresani in Madras.

**Mofussil**—A term used to denote the interior of the country as opposed to a town or head station.

**Nautch**—A kind of ballet-dance performed by dancing girls.

**Pagoda**—An idol temple; an idol; a coin long current in South India.

**Palanquin (Palki)**—A box-litter for travelling in, with a pole projecting before and behind which is borne on the shoulders of 2, 4 or 6 men.

**Peon**—A term (taken from the Portuguese *peao*) commonly used by Europeans in the sense of a 'a foot soldier', an inferior police official; sometimes a courier. In modern use, a messenger.

**Peshwa**—Originally the chief minister of the Mahratta power; in the 18th century becoming prince of an independent Mahratta state.

**Razeenama**—An amicable adjustment.

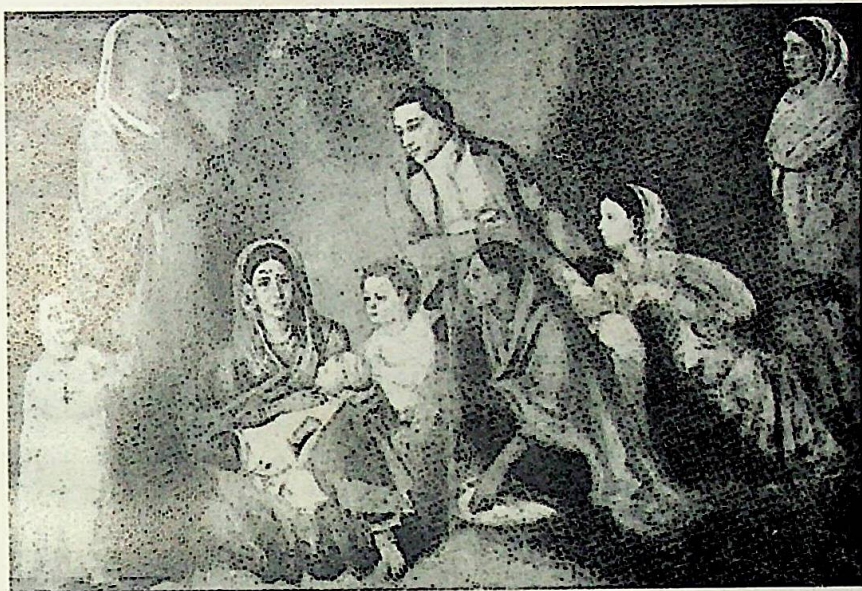
**Sergeant Major**—The senior non-commissioned officer in a regiment. He being the right man of the adjutant, his duties were very important.

**Zamorin**—The title for many centuries of the Hindu Sovereign of Calicut and the country round.

**Zenana**—The apartment of a house in which the women of the family are secluded; a harem.

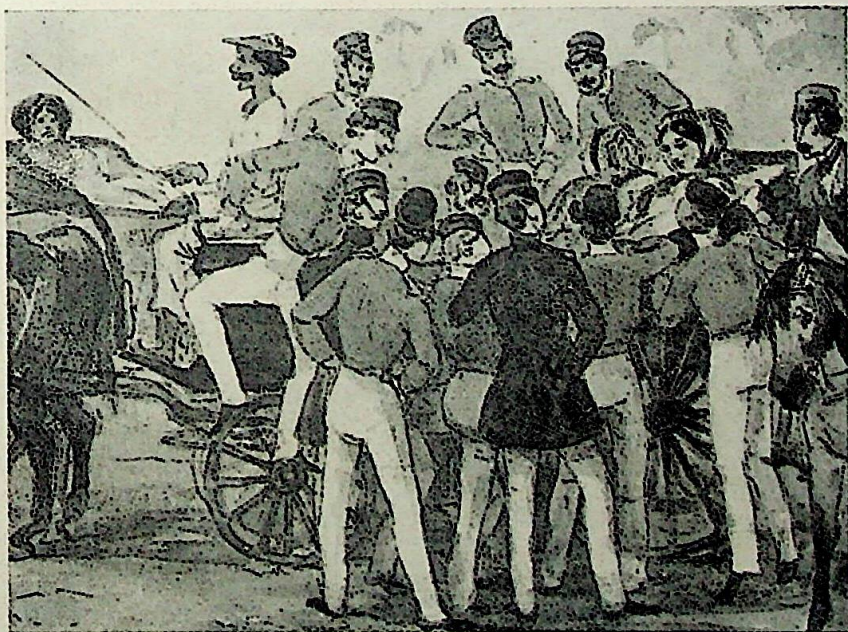


## 1. European with his Indian Wife



Early European settlers were asked to marry native women. A later picture shows General William Palmer with his Indian wife and children. (p. 15).

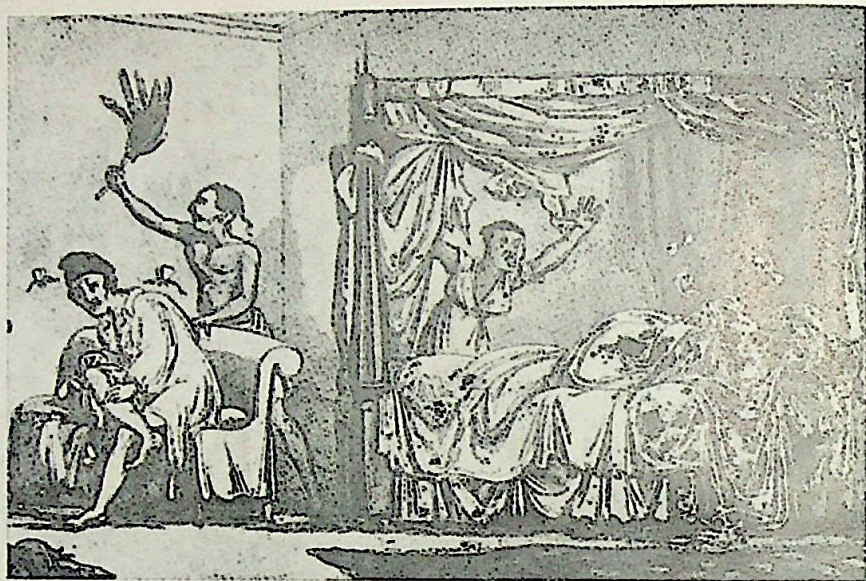
## 2. A 'Spin' and the 'Danglers'



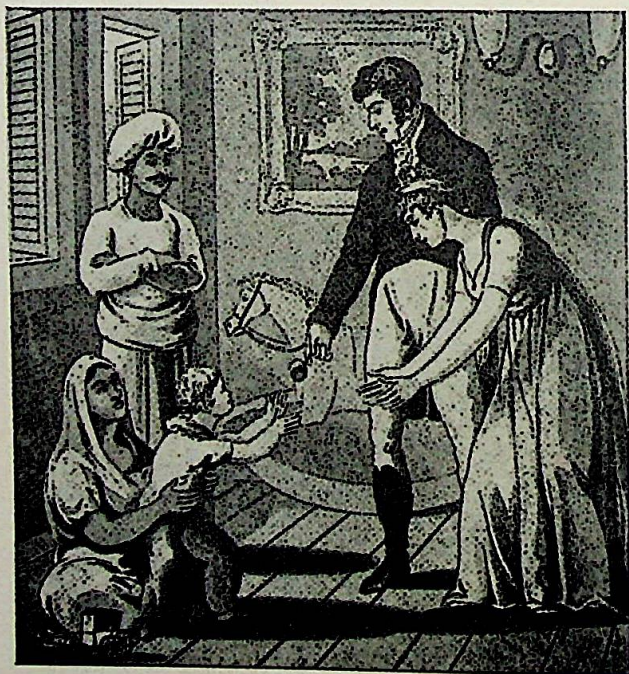
Shortage of European Women in India continued through 18th century. (p. 171).



### 3. Two Varieties of Mosquitoes



"It is the female variety that is really keen on human blood, and more vicious than the male." (p. 211).

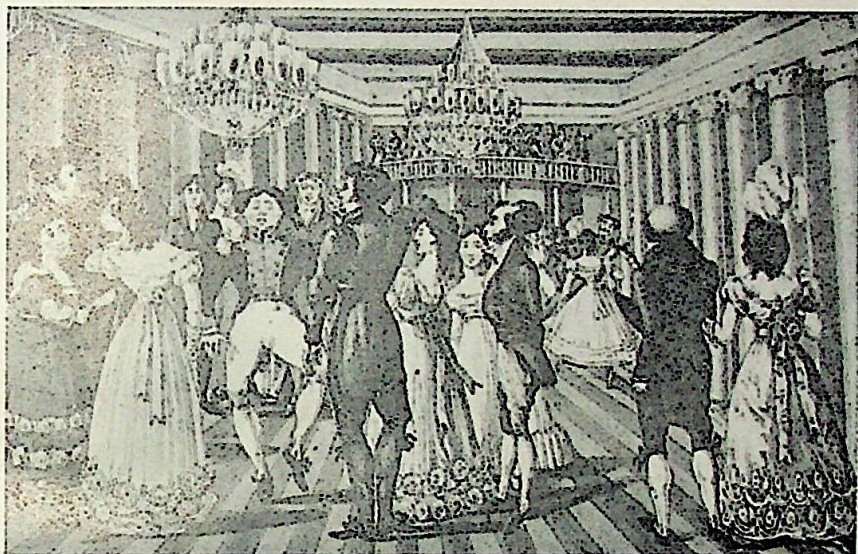


### 4. Reverted to Western Life-Style

European women, on arrival, not only reversed the 'Indianisation' of European settlers but with their charms 'Wester-nised' a number of Indians. (p. 10).



## 5. A Ball at Government House, Calcutta



The European ladies were immoderately fond of dancing, an exercise ill calculated for burning climate of India. (p. 167).

## 6. The Cawnpore Heroine

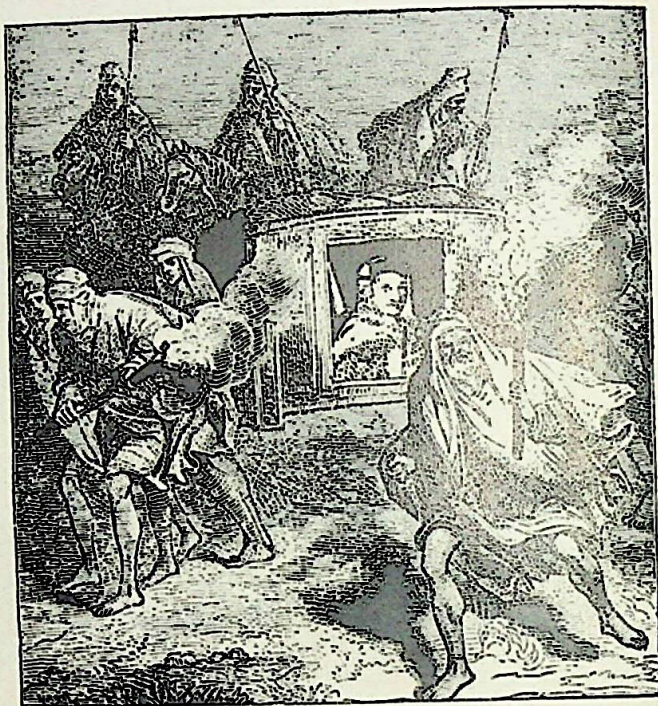


Miss Wheeler defending herself against mutineers. (p. 205).

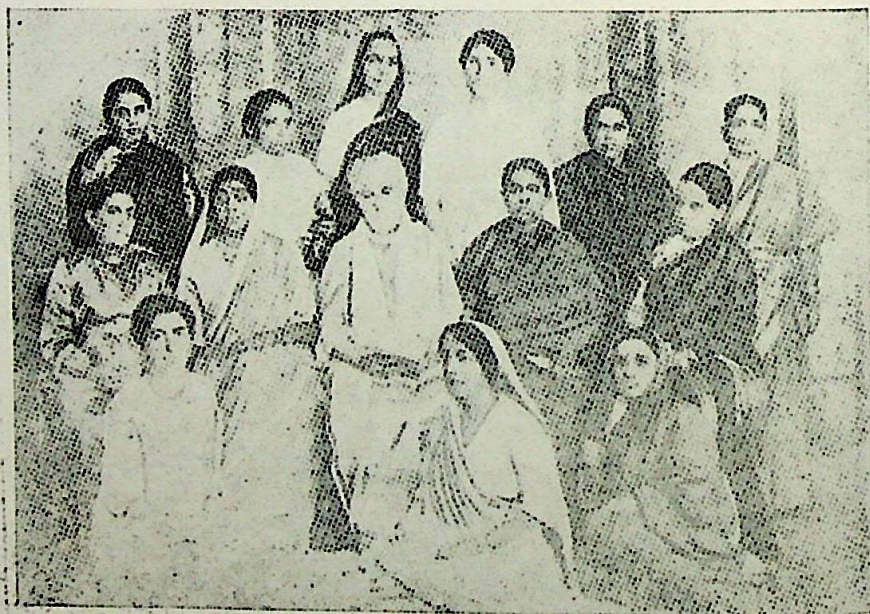


**7. Begum Sumroo Fleeing in a Palanquin**

Begum Sumroo's marriage with Levasseau (a Frenchman) proved unpopular. Her army revolted. The Begum and her husband sought refuge in flight. (p. 70).



**8. Battle for the Ballot**



Group photo of a deputation of Indian women led by Mrs. Annie Besant and Mrs. Maragret Cousins who waited on the Viceroy and the Secretary of State in 1917 and demanded franchise for women on equal terms with men. (p. 219).



## Preface

Long before the first English merchant Captain Hawkins' ship *Hector* touched the Indian coast at Surat in 1607, the Portuguese had settled in India. Vasco de Gama was the first to find out his passage round the Cape and set foot in Calicut on 22 May 1498, where the Portuguese built the first European factory in India and later the first European fortress commanded by Alphonso de Albuquerque in 1503 was erected. For more than a century the Portuguese held sway over Malabar coast and its trade. The Portuguese and later the Dutch were the first Europeans who brought Europeanism in India. Then came the English and French traders and soldiers followed by other European nationals. The English stay in India for over three centuries was, however, the most wide-spread and influential.

When two civilisations meet they are bound to influence each other. The early European settler in India also came under the spell of Indian social customs and manners. He took to *Hooka*, *Arrack* and Indian dress. He kept *Zenana*, married native women and became fond of cock fights, kite flying and *Nautch*. When he went back to his home country, sometimes he took his Indian wife and children along with him.

Majority of the English men like their other European counterparts, who arrived in India as factors or soldiers of the East India Company in the seventeenth century, were either adventurers or recruits who had been acquired by press gangs in England. No body belonging to a respectable family would voluntarily come forth in those days to enlist in the foreign service which was abhorred both by civilians and soldiers. The



earliest European force of the Company in India was mostly composed of adventurers, debtors, derelicts, criminals and convicts. (For details please see 'Military History of British India—1607-1947').

The first European women who made the voyage to India were Portuguese. The King of Portugal sent a small annual investment of female orphans to India at his charge with a dowry which he gave them "to further the peopling of the Portugal colonies." The East India Company copied the Portuguese custom of drafting out a supply of women to their possessions in the East. They were not given dowries but were guaranteed their 'diet' during a year in India. She was scarcely landed when she was overwhelmed with offers of marriage. She would select a man of fat appointment who could "bestow her a silver teapot, a palanquin with a set of bearers for visits by day, and a buggy for the evening drive". "As regards unmarried ladies (European)", wrote Cadwalladar Cumberbund, "the cards are to a certain extent in their own hands, and on the way they play them depends their social position. Excessive beauty, though often falling prize to a sergeant-major, may, if well managed, aspire to the conquest of a K.C.B. and good looks not infrequently to the subjugation of an attenuated member of council..... since free trade in women as well as wares has been sanctioned."

In those days of perilous long and wearisome journey by sea, European women in the beginning did not accompany their men to India. The European men kept concubines or married native women. The European husband found it easier to teach his Indian wife his language than himself to learn the vernacular and so the Western language, customs, manners and practices became the predominate tone of his home and children. Those Indians who became Christians due to missionary work tried to adopt Western social manners and etiquettes. As the trade developed, profits increased and European traders amassed riches, a number of English women came to India to seek wealthy husbands and military officers and 'for adventure and experience'. Following the establishment of British rule in India, influx of educated and cultured English ladies increased which had a considerable impact on the outlook, thinking and life style of the Indian women. The English women on arrival



in India not only reversed the 'Indianisation' of the European settlers and completely weaned away their men from things Indian but with their charms and superior social and political status westernised a number of Indians.

Position of Indian woman in the sixteenth/seventeenth century was pathetic. She had no personality of her own, neither status nor individuality. Female infanticide, early marriage, *sati* or enforced widowhood was her lot. Education and social opportunities for her improvement and progress were denied to her. The *purdah*, the property structure and customs of polygyny had a demoralising effect on her. Naturally in the midst of such a situation, 'Their only vocation was to minister men's physical pleasures and wants; they were considered incapable of developing any of those higher mental qualities which would make them more worthy of consideration and also more capable of playing an useful part in life,' wrote Abbe J. Dubois. Woman was regarded as inferior to man in every possible way.

In ancient times India had a flexible social structure which accorded due respect to women. A radical change, however, occurred in the medieval period when all that liberalism of the past was replaced by prejudice against women. When the British rule started in India, the position of Indian woman had sunk to the lowest level. A fundamental change in the very social outlook and structure had become necessary to enable the Indian woman play her rightful role in the life and growth of society.

Before the Europeans' arrival in India, the *Bhakti* movement had already spread in many parts of India. Basically a spiritual movement, it also aimed at social reformation, uplifting the downtrodden and according equal privileges to the woman. Besides rendering some ideological support, it did not help materially in improving the condition of woman. The arrival and rule of European powers and influx of European women in India provided the necessary reinforcement to the ideology and emergence of environment for uplifting the status of Indian woman and enabling her to regain her lost personality.

The Europeans brought along with them the customs, manners and fashions of Western civilisation. *Purdah*-less English women freely mixing with men and their participation in ballroom dancing, games, riding, smoking, drinking, hunting



and open air social functions created a desire in the Indian women to break the shackles of seclusion, isolation and slavery, whereas the Indian men generally decried the degraded Western morals. However, with the firm establishment of the *Raj*, development of communications and transport and spread of Christianity in India, admirers and adherents of Western civilisation also multiplied.

The British rulers of India undertook social reforms and enacted laws to stop female infanticide and *sati* and legalise widow remarriage. Enlightened English ladies spread Western education, opened hospitals and dispensaries, established women's institutions and worked with zeal for the uplift and progress of their Indian sisters. Whatever progress has been achieved by the modern Indian woman in various walks of life is partially due to the pioneering efforts and interest of some European ladies like Annie Besant, Margaret Cousins and others for the welfare of their Indian sisters. Other factors such as general awakening of Asians in the twentieth century, the political struggle for Indian Independence and the role of UNO in initiating global efforts for equal opportunities for women have also contributed towards improving the status of women but the genesis and growth of movement for the emancipation of Indian women was to a large extent the result of impact of advanced European civilisation, prolonged contacts with English women and selfless efforts of some largehearted European ladies.

Rudyard Kipling described a hill-station Western woman as frivolous, vain, sometimes adulterous, a heartless bitch with an ever tinkering laugh and the occasional soft spot for a handsome subaltern. Some other writers have also regretted the low moral standards of separated European women in the Victorian age. But faced with dangers and personal risks, these English women displayed exemplary courage, resolution and bravery. Though strangers to India, they continued to maintain their lordliness and also shared the Whiteman burden with a dogged devotion to duty. With the *Raj* coming to an end in August, 1947, the English women also departed, but they have left behind a notable imprint on the Indian society.

H.S. BHATIA



## CHAPTER 1

# Old-Time European Women

HARRY HOBBS

Francis Bacon, the old-time philosopher said that "a mixture of a lie doth often add pleasure" but while other collectors of historical matter may walk on the stilts of fancy converting history into romance—disguising facts with ornaments of imagination, I prefer quoting from sources that can be considered reliable.

While it cannot be denied that life in India in those days was trying, yet conditions in England were also pretty grim. To the common people there were Squires and Parsons with the law behind them, all merciless.

Indian villages were cleaner than British while it must be admitted that Indians taught us the benefit of bathing—that is, quite a lot of us. There was also the blessing of being considered of superior race leading many to try to live up to it.

While books like William Hickey tell of prodigal days of dissipation 95% of the British in India lived not in riches with little to relieve monotony and boredom. A poet expressed that anonymously, 150 years ago :—

"The tedious hours that indolently creep,  
Th' Unchequered day of apathy and sleep,  
The listless means ingenium men contrive  
To bake, and broil, half dead, and half-alive,  
Paint all the ills by every griffin felt,



Who learns his doom to grumble and to melt,  
And boast of all our luxuries the best  
A glass of well-cooled water worth the rest."

### First English trader marries in India

One of the early marriages was that of Captain William Hawkins of the ship called the *Hector*<sup>1</sup> who after a tedious voyage (from March 1606 to the 20th August 1607) arrived at Surat and after trouble with the Portuguese went to Agra where Jehanghir entertained him, promising an allowance of £ 53,200 a year, or the command of 400 horse and caused him to take a wife of the country, daughter of an Armenian Christian, called Mubariksha with whom he apparently lived happily and had to fight her brothers before he could take her with him to England. Talboys Wheeler in his "Early Travels in India," says quite a lot about Hawkins.

### English ladies arrive

In 1670 some English ladies were sent to Madras.<sup>2</sup> When they arrived they were officially welcomed and taken to the Fort. Nothing further seems to have been heard of them, except that, several years later two of them were living in the Fort on a small allowance granted by the Company.<sup>3</sup> A century later there were 72 English married women, 10 widows, 7 unmarried, 74 children living in Madras.

With a view to increase the English population in Bombay a number of women were sent. A letter of August 24, 1688 states: "And for such single women or maids as shall now come unto you we order that if they desire it and do not otherwise dispose of themselves by marriage to Englishmen, then for one year after their arrival they shall have victuals at our charge with one suit of wearing apparel such as shall be convenient according to the fashion of the country during which time they are to be employed in our service as you shall order and think fit, but not to be employed in planting; and we do not consent that the said Englishwomen or maids be permitted to marry other people but those of our own nation or such others as are Protestants and upon their marriage to be free."

That guarantee was faithfully kept. Then came a second party expecting they would be treated like the first but their



claims were not recognised. Agitation secured a small allowance "to keep them from perishing for want of sustenance". The poor creatures had been deluded and almost left to starve. The small stock of virtue which they had brought with them was soon expended. Then, and not till then —when they had been forced into temptation, authority with mocking piety threatened them. Their conduct was reported and orders came that if they did not behave they were to be deprived of their liberty, jailed, and kept on bread and water till they are embarked on board ship for England.

#### **English soldiers asked to marry native women**

The order from the Directors of the East India Company dated January 25, 1688 said : "Induce by all means you can invent our soldiers to marry with the Native women, because it will be impossible to get ordinary young women as we before directed to pay their own passages, although Gentlewomen sufficient do offer themselves." The offsprings of these unions were scandalously neglected.

300 years ago women were allowed to come out, partly in order to prevent illicit unions, and partly to lessen the temptation to marry Portuguese Roman Catholics. They were too few in numbers and the consequence of this shortage was that most men remained single and established zenanas. In 1768-9 there were 74 Civil Servants in Madras; only 6 were married of which 5 had their wives with them.

#### **English women as active as men**

What the Englishwomen lost in numbers, however, they amply made up in vigour. They were said to have been as active as men, and their influence was traceable in many of the early quarrels.

"Mrs. Francis, wife of the late Lieutenant Francis killed at Hooghly by the Moors, being sent hither from Bengal very poor, she made it her petition that she might keep a Punch House for her maintenance. But she being a notorious bad woman, it is agreed that she be not permitted to keep a public house, lest it be the occasion of many debaucheries; she having lived very badly here. It is therefore ordered that she go on the "Royal James" to the West Coast according to the High



Honourable Company's order, she be allowed something out of the proceeds of the prizes to provide her necessaries in consideration of the loss of her husband in the late unhappy Bengal Expedition." From subsequent entry we learn that this lady was afterwards sent home to prevent "further scandal in our city."<sup>4</sup>

In 1706, Arthur King, a Civil Servant complained officially that he considered himself insulted because the surgeon's wife had taken her place in Church above his wife. He asked the Council to order that his wife should be placed above the surgeon's wife in future.

We still have important nobodies like that today although they would hardly go so far as to make that an official complaint.

### Ostentatious living

Colonel Rennell, the first Surveyor-General of Bengal, wrote in 1762: "The inhabitants affect a deal of ostentation in their manner of living. Few private gentlemen live at less expense than £5—6,000 a year and those married about £8—10,000. The Governor lives at the rate of £20,000 per annum."

In 1764 the Colonel hoped to retire in a few years with £5—6,000 and wrote optimistically that, while he had an allowance of £900 and perquisites £1,000. "I can enjoy my Friends, my Bottle, and all the Necessaries of Life for £400." A year later his tone changed. In 1768 he only hoped to retire on £120 a year.

Belinda, an Irish girl was in Calcutta when there was no Protestant church. There had been one but during an earthquake or a cyclone it sunk into the ground so the Portuguese church was borrowed and used for fifteen years when it was found to be damp and draughty. As our men were said to leave their Bibles and their Morals at the Cape when coming out, and pick them up twenty-five years later on their final trip home. The ladies did likewise. That is, if they wanted them, they did not feel the absence of a Protestant Church very deeply.

Belinda was with a picnic party amongst whom was Warren Hastings, in a river excursion. At Chinsurah there was a fine old church built by the Dutch but always thinly attended. She exclaimed, "Is it not very very strange now, Mr. Hastings, here



is a fine church yet nobody at all goes to it—and in Calcutta there is no church, why, everybody goes to it !”

Philip Stanhope, an ex-officer of Dragoons arrived in Madras in August 1774 and was invited to dine with the Governor. He was “Agreeably surprised at the sight of several card tables which were filled with English ladies . . . They were dressed in light muslins, the produce of the country and seemed totally to have laid aside that unbecoming stiffness which too often contributed to diminish the Charms of the English fair.”

### No purdah for English ladies

In the 1770's and 90's English ladies did not share the scruples of later generations about mixing with men whose wives lived in purdah. Warren Hastings related to his wife his mistake in allowing the Nawab Wazir to see two English ladies and his efforts to assure him that they were by no means representative of English beauty; and Lord Valentia recorded the disgust of the Wazir's son at the appearance of two English ladies who insisted on attending a joint dinner at Lucknow. In both instances the initiative came from the English side, the moral recoil from the Indian, and in both cases English public opinion sympathised with the Indian feelings.

In this particular matter the freedom of the 18th century woman went too far, but on the other hand her lack of Victorian tastes and taboos removed one of the greatest obstacles to cordial racial relations. They had no objection to the hookah and occasionally smoked it themselves; they adopted the fashion of the turban and carried it to London.

When the Ameer of Afghanistan was in Calcutta some 75 years ago he was entertained to dinner by Sir Andrew Fraser, Lieut. Governor of Bengal, a Scot who spoke the most perfect English I have ever listened to. The party was well attended and charming due to fair sex.

All the senior ladies were there with their senior—official husbands. Looking round the table, the Ameer gave Sir Andrew a sly dig and said, “I see you do here what we do in Afghanistan.”

“What's that ?” asked Sir Andrew.

“You keep all your pretty women locked up.”



### Female Boarding School

By permission of the Government, Mrs. Murray (late Mrs. Stevenson of the Female Asylum) begs to inform her Friends and the publick that she will open a Boarding School in Black Town (Madras) on the first of January next for Young Ladies, which she intends conducting (as much as possible) in the manner most generally approv'd of in England. Her Scholars will be genteely Boarded, tenderly treated, carefully Educated, and the most strict attention paid to their morals. They will be taught Reading and Writing, the English language and Arithmetic; Musick, French, Drawing and Dancing; with Lace, Tambour and Embroidery, all sorts of Plain and flowered needle work on moderate terms. Day Scholars received and instructed as above.

"N.B. Apply to Mrs. Murray, near Mrs. Gowdie's, for particulars.

15th December, 1791".

### A young lady accomplishments

At that time a young lady's accomplishments were:

"She excels on the harp, works patterns with skill,  
Writes a ladylike hand, can waltz and quadrille,  
In temper she is amiable, perhaps to a fault,  
Drinks sparing of wine and abominates malt."

"Aliph Cheem" in "Lays of Ind" gives many samples of social life "Miss Arabella Green", a Colonel's daughter—

"At 6 she went to England:—that  
You know is quite the rule:—  
And there her mother left her at  
A Brighton boarding school."

When fifteen and a half she was brought out, with a head full of business ideals

"I do believe in scarlet coats  
But chiefly at a ball



For I have heard that ten pound notes  
Are scarce among them all."

Unfortunately there was no sign of Collectors, Brigadiers and Staff Corps Colonels and she eventually returned home, as single as she started, what was said—a Returned Empty.

#### A Frenchman view about English women

Count de Warren, a Frenchman serving in the Company's army, let himself go in a chapter about English women in India two centuries ago, when damsel-errantry led them, "full of health, of hope, and of gaiety, on a voyage of discovery in search of a husband."<sup>5</sup>

"The adventuress, having arrived in Calcutta, looks around for what she has come—a husband. Assuredly she will not have any difficulty in finding one; she will only be embarrassed by the number she may choose from old and young, civil and military, patrician and plebian; from the old general with his periodical bilious attacks and his parchment visage, which has not perspired for the last ten years, for the sun has sucked out all the moisture, to the young red-and-white ensign, who makes eyes at her whilst he wipes off the large drops that roll down his forehead. She is scarcely landed, before, in the very first fortnight, she is overwhelmed with offers of marriage. The poor creature is so stunned with the flatteries which buzz in her ears, that at length the poor little head, never one of the strongest is completely turned. She begins to think that she really possesses all the perfections which are attributed to her; and she is told so often that she is an angel, that she knows not how to limit her pretensions in the great matter of the establishment."<sup>6</sup> The aunt preaches to her, morning and night, against lowering herself by condescending to dance with anyone under the rank of a first-class civilian, or an officer of high standing in the enjoyment of a fat appointment, who can bestow on his bride thrice indispensable things, and which in India are considered necessary for the happiness of conjugal life; namely, a silver teapot, a palanquin with a set of bearers for visits by day, and a buggy for the evening drive."

Failing in all efforts to make a desirable match, we are told by the count that the lady, "all forlorn" at length goes preten-



dedly for her health to a distant station, and then marries a poor subaltern.

Count de Warren's opinion of the manners of these ladies is not very favourable. He admitted that they were more intelligent than the ladies of the same class in France, but complains that they affected a childish simplicity—"an affectation of ignorance on the one side, impossible after all they have read, fresh from their infancy, in unmutilated edions of the Bible."

English woman in those days went in for big meals—that is, when they could afford them. Diet and blood pressure never troubled them. They felt that a man had a short time to eat, so they made sure of their share. Even in my day people were recommended to buy a tonic which would not only improve the appetite, but make them hold more, but when all is said and done, the spoon has always killed more than the glass.

But now we have the young ladies at dinnr. "If you are a Frenchman, you will be understruck at the enormous quantity of beer and wine absorded by these young English ladies, in appearance so pale and delicate. I could scarcely recover from my astonishment at seeing my fair neighbour quietly dispose of a bottle and a half of very strong beer eked out with a fait allowance of claret, and wind up with five or six glasses of light but spirited champagne taken with her dessert. The only effect it seemed to produce upon her was visible in the diminished languor of her manner, and the increased brilliancy of her eyes. I hoped at first she was an exception; but I was very soon convinced that she but exemplified the rule. It is in this manner that the majority of English ladies combat the lassitude of mind and body induced by the climae; but the time soon comes when such a regimen as this destsoys their health. They are then compelled to leave their husbands; and return with their children to Europe. But the fatal habit is contracted; the voyage home only tends to strengthen it. As time advances, it becomes more deeply rooted; and too often the brandy bottle is the miserable finale of the sweet creatures, who left their mother's arms and their father's roof all bright in purity and beauty."

"Quiz" author of "Qui Hai" published in 1816 expressed his disgust at seeing one of the prettiest girls put away two pounds



of mutton chops at one sitting. Growing girls often eat more than boys, but that lasts a few months only.

### **Bordom relieved by dak**

The bordom of life in those days can be seen from the letter (March 24) in the Bengal Gazette of 1781. "It is inconceivable what irregularities are permitted and sanctified by the Tyrant Custom, in opposition to every rule and every idea of Proprierty and Common Sense. I dare say that naming the Grievance will alone be sufficient to have it immediately redressed, I mean the absurd, unfair irregular and dangerous mode of suffering people promiscuously to paw over their Nighbour's letters at the Dak in the manner they now do, nay more, dreadful thought ! take them away, read and even cancel them, if they choose.

It is possible that we call ourselves a civilised people, even a reasonable set of beings when we suffer the dearest pledges of Friendship, Intimacy, Interest, Love, even Life to be ravished from us perhaps by our bitterest enemies. Did Government know the direful Consequences of the present mode of delivering letters from the Dak they would hastily interest themselves in reforming the abuse by placing a strong rail at the entrance of the delivering room and obliging the clerks to deliver the letters.

### **Centenarian English women**

Everybody didn't die young. Madras records reported that "On May 7, 1780 were interred the Remains of Mrs. Mary Powney, upwards of 100 years of age, the relict of Captain Powney, commander of a ship, the oldest resident."

Hickey's Bengal Gazette told of another centenarian "Mrs. Mary Bowers, died 1781, fidgetted into the grave by fear of losing a large fortune which she had acquired by industry and frugality.

Died, Yesterday, (15 March 1791) Mrs. Strange, wife of James Strange Esqr; Paymaster at Tanjore. Her many virtues and accomplished talents render her loss a sincere subject to her friends and society.

The most remarkable inscription is in the old Christian cemetery in Agra which may be seen upon a slab to the right of



the entrance gate which reads: "Sacred to the memory of Mrs. Caroline Thomas. Died 22nd December 1894. Aged 145."

In St. John's Churchyard, Calcutta, where 12,000 Christians lie buried is the tomb of Mrs. Frances Johnson, born 1725, married 1738 (13 years old). Had four children and four husband. She lived to the age of 87 and was highly respected.

Marriage announcements were differently expressed:—"At Tranquebar, H. Meyer Esqr.: aged 64 to Miss Casina Couperas, a very accomplished young lady of 16 after a courtship of 5 years."

Two sisters writing about their experiences in Meerut in 1856, said, "Everybody in India knows exactly the number of proposals each young lady has received the day after they were made, and even the exact words used on the occasion. How all this is brought about no one can tell. One of the girls was riding a mettlesome horse and was chased by an old gentleman who caught hold of her bridle and in most agitated tones implored her to listen kindly to his suit and then and there proposed marriage.

Thoroughly bewildered she raised her veil when, "with a howl of despair, the little man sank back and subsided on the grass. He had addressed the wrong lady. As no offence had been intended she cantered off, her mistaken adorer wringing his hands."

In the early days of the P. & O. they "piqued themselves on allowing ladies to have any little luxury at any time they pleased to call for it; they have effervescing lemonade while gentlemen are restricted to soda water. Ices are sometimes served out to ladies, but gentlemen are prohibited from touching them. A lady is allowed to have preserves at tea whenever she chooses while gentlemen are obliged to be content with the usual horrid salt butter. Ladies are also permitted to have wine and water on deck at supper, but gentlemen were obliged to descend for it.

The scrappy diary of an officer's wife contains enough to make one curious. She left England on September 24, 1859 in the sailing ship *Accrington* bound for Calcutta to rejoin her husband who was serving upcountry.

Apparently the ship was a trooper with many soldiers' wives and children.



The voyage was memorable on account of the large number of deaths on board. During the 9 months between embarkation at Birkenhead and arrival at Calcutta, 97 deaths of men women and children (mostly children) were recorded. There was murder, near shipwreck, the poisoning of the Captain. Chief Mate and attempted poisoning of the doctor on board and the ship had to make for Pernambuco in S. America. 6 members of the crew were sent back from Calcutta to stand trial for murder; 10 more were sent back from Calcutta as witnesses. As a result of the trial two men (after the barbarous fashion of the day) were hanged in chains and 4 went to prison. She reached Nagode where she found her husband sick in hospital.

A Government servant going home for good in 1820 wrote of the ritual of seating at the table for meals, testified to social importance.

"I was introduced" in due form to the other passengers on the very important occasion of our taking seats at the first day's dinner on board. The preparations for this piece of ceremonial, that of taking our seats, had busily occupied the Captain of the Ship for at least an hour and a half, before the band struck up "The Roast Beef of old England", and summoned us to the cuddy. The Army List and the Calcutta Register had been carefully studied, to assign to each, his or her, proper allotment at the table. Dates, and the order of precedence seriously consulted before the Captain ventured to place a card on the different plates, with the name of the passenger who was to be there, and there only, for the voyage. It was amusing to observe the evident mortification of rich Mrs. Crore, the Agent's lady, when she found herself removed at least for chairs from the post of honour at the Captain's side.

### Theatrical performances

Some Calcutta people were extremely select judging by a "Caution" published in the *Calcutta Gazette* of February 23, 1797.

"A certain person who made her appearance on the first night of the performance is desired to take notice that in future she will not be permitted to remain in the house should she be so ill-advised as to repeat her visit."

"Theatre, Wheler Place."



A theatrical criticism appeared in the "Englishman" in 1841 about Mrs. Deacle, one of the performers.

"Had not her devotion to Bacchus interfered with her attention to the rights of Thania and Melpomene she might have been valuable."

### A literary Lady

Mrs. Sherwood who came out about 170 years ago to join her husband, a Captain in the 53rd Regt. then stationed in Calcutta but expected to be in Madras had some letters sent from there to Calcutta. Extra postage on four or five cost her over two pounds.

The heartlessness of those days strikes a sad note. When the 53rd were leaving Calcutta, "Little Maria Parker was dying and her father obtained permission to remain behind for two days but the child died on the second morning and was buried within an hour."

Mrs. Sherwood wrote many books; one, "Little Henry and his Bearer" sold well for quite seventy years. She lived to learn a lot about what was described as the "splendid misery of life in a red coat."

### Soldiers' women in India

"I had his children—one, two, three,  
One week I had them safe and sound,  
The next beneath this mangoe tree  
By him in Barracks' burying ground.  
'Tis I, not they, are gone and dead;  
They live; they know; they feel; they see;  
Their spirits light the golden shade  
Beneath the giant mangoe tree."

### Another literary lady

The authoress of "The Journal of Mrs. Fenton—1826-1830" sailed with her husband, Captain Niel Campbell to join his regiment in Bengal. A refined, Christian woman, by no means the ideal wife of a soldier, she confesses that she was sick all the voyage—July 17, 1826 to January 3rd. 1827, and was weeping every night.



Arriving in Calcutta she was well received by friends and relates that the second person she met did not seem an attractive specimen of Indian Young ladies who sat down after breakfast and deliberately started to smoke a cheroot. Dinner the same day was a long ceremony, many dishes, "at last terminated in cheroot smoking by all present except myself."

In those days people went upcountry by boat as far as they could get up the Ganges and naturally saw a lot of the country. Mrs. Fenton (Campbell had died after nine months in the country and she married a brother officer of her husband's shortly after).

She appeared to have disapproved of missionaries. On the banks of the Ganges during her journey she had a talk with an Indian who said he was "a very good Christian and had read the Bible which was a very pretty book written by Lindley Murray containing true stories of which he most admired was Noah making a ship and putting all things in it," which didn't give her much of an opinion of converted Hindus.

At another place when her budgerao had tied up for the night she saw a fire and went to see "what the natives were doing." "Fancy my horror and disgust when I found they were burning an old man whose son, with the most perfect indifference of occasionally stirring up the embers."

Within a year of their arrival in India Captain Campbell died. From her book he seemed to have been tired, stayed in bed and in a few hours died from nothing in particular, as the Irish doctor reported. As it was beyond her means to return to England she married Captain Fenton.

When an officer's wife found herself a widow she found mighty little sympathy anywhere; those who may have felt sorry for her, were too poor to be of financial assistance. There was a Military Officers Fund which helped when funds permitted but as it cost about Rs. 3,000 to pay her fares from an upcountry station to England—that is what it cost the widow of a lieutenant, and the Fund was raised from subscriptions from serving officers, the Fund was hardly reliable. The alternative was marriage—even that was uncertain.<sup>7</sup>

Lord Clive's Fund also helped widows with a pension ranging from Rs. 96/6/9 per month down to Rs. 12/3 for the widow of an Ensign which continued during widowhood.



### Wives of soldiers

Very few European women are to be seen with the regiments in India. Such as adventure thither, soon fall victims to the climate, which nothing but the most vigorous constitutions, back by temperance and uncommon prudence, can enable them to resist. Hence, the few that survive, though they present rather a masculine appearance, find it expedient to confine themselves within the barracks; keeping out of the sun, and avoiding the use of strong liquors. The children of such women usually prove remarkably hardy; whereas the issue of an European father by a native woman, is usually of an effeminate, weakly constitution.

In the early days each company of a regiment was allowed to take 10 soldiers' wives. A writer when she came out saw "one poor soul who was found in excess; lots were drawn to determine who was to be sent ashore. The unlucky woman wrung her hands, weeping to find herself homeless and penniless."

"When a European Regiment was going on service there was great anxiety of parents that their daughters in the regiment should be married before the Corps left.

"Why do you allow such a mere child to marry when her husband will leave her next week?" "Because she can then draw wife's pay while he's away; and if he is killed she will get her six months' widows' pension."

### Florence Nightingale and military life in India

Florence Nightingale, the Second Greatest Woman in the Christian Era who, against public and family opinion began her attack on the question of Military Hospitals in the Crimea and elevated Nursing into a profession, afterwards took interest in military life in India. I have a book by her in which is her own signature which was, in 1863 a damning summing-up of the conditions exposed by a Royal Commission on the Sanitary State of the Army in India.

"These Stational Returns were placed, in manuscript, in the hands of Miss Nightingale who, after examining them by the light of her practical experiences in the East—in hospitals in barracks, and in the field—addressed the following observations on them to Lord Stanley. Florence Nightingale's book is called



"Observations on the evidence contained in the Stational Reports submitted by her on the Royal Commission of the Sanitary State of the Army in India," and is an amazing summary of the ignorance of the Government in regard to the conditions under which British troops served in almost every station in India.

One of Florence Nightingale's suggestions was that every soldier on arriving in India should be taught the rudiments of the language of the district he served in. Right up to the day when India was deserted, that was not done.

'Leave to marry' in the British army means that those only who marry with consent of the Commanding Officer have a claim to quarters in barracks. The proportion of quarters allowed by regulation at home is 6 married men per company of 100, in addition to married serjeants. When going to India, 12 married couples per 100 men, together with a proportionate increase of wives of serjeants, are allowed to go with the regiment, a number which high authorities consider too small. There is a general opinion that the proportion of married people allowed to go to India should be raised. The question is mainly one of sea transport and barrack accommodation, neither of which would be very costly as compared with the benefits to health and discipline which all agree would result from increasing the number of married men, always the steadiest, most temperate, and best behaved in the regiment.

Throughout India, however, there is better provision of 'married quarters' generally than on home stations. At most places they are reported as 'sufficient', at some 'insufficient', at others 'very bad', and at a few there are none. Where they are insufficient or non-existent, the 'married quarters' are men's barrack-rooms or huts, divided off by curtains or partitions. only at a few places are married people placed in barrack rooms with unmarried soldiers, still this practice does exist. One of the consequences of 'allowing' marriage in the army is certainly that decent healthy quarters should be 'allowed' too. No time should be lost, for this is especially necessary in India.

### Striking contrasts

In the matter of soldiers' wives there are two instances of striking contrasts (each happened during the Mutiny); one; the destruction by dysentery of 64 wives and 166 children of British



soldiers at Dumdum; the other, a request made to and complied with by Sir John Lawrence from an officer of a native regiment of guides regarding the native wives. 'Mind you look after these women carefully', and do not let them be in distress; several of their 'husbands, men of rank, have been killed'. The request was loyally fulfilled, and as loyally appreciated by the men.

During the Mutiny at Dumdum 554 women and 770 children were crowded together without care or supervision, and the proportion which fell victims to intemperance; immorality, filth, and foul air was more than six times, in either case, the ordinary mortality of women and children in Bengal. The fathers and husbands were fighting or dead in our battles. This massacre killed as many as it is supposed fell by the hands of the mutineers.

It is singular that in no one part of the Dumdum report does the slightest allusion occur to this tragedy, making one think that it cannot be an isolated case. And it appears to have risen solely from the absence of any regulation as to the care of soldiers' wives and children in the husbands' and fathers' absence. Families go to India; and as long as the regiment remains fixed things may go on pretty well, provided there are decent separate quarters and a careful, kindly commanding officer. But send the regiment on active service, and there is no way of caring for the families. They take their chance, under circumstances where they *cannot* help themselves. Or they are all huddled together, as at Dumdum, with the result, that while the husbands were punishing the murderers of English women and children in the upper provinces, their own wives and children were being destroyed in vast numbers, for want of care. Why?—Could it not be made a necessary part of army arrangements to appoint a 'picked' married officer to act as guardian over these women and children, to see to their comfort and conduct, to their being properly lodged and cared for? The manner of providing for them out of their husbands' pay is a matter of detail easily settled. If only anyone will take the trouble to do it, the thing can be done. But more than this, it should be made matter of regulation throughout the whole service. There should be personal responsibility somewhere. At Dumdum nobody was held responsible, and nobody was



punished for the result. If one-tenth of the calamity had happened in England there would have been coroners' inquests over and over again and public opinion, if not law, would have punished some one. At Dumdum the enquiry took place after the destruction of human life had been going on for months.

### **Most devoted to India**

One of the most notable of English women who devoted her life to India was Mrs. Annie Besant who was born in 1847, married in 1867 a Church of England parson but, with a mind and body too virile for the dulness of parish life, turned against her husband as well as against religion. Various eminent members of the Church of England tried to change her views but did no more than strengthen her hostility to Christian teachings, rendering her to be unfit for the wife of a vicar. She left her husband and her two children and took up with Charles Bradlaugh with whom she worked for fifteen years. In my boyish days I remember her standing with him in the gutter of the Strand, Tottenham Court Road, and Oxford Street selling his book "The Fruits of Philosophy."

After Fifteen Years of Bradlaugh she took up with Bernard Shaw who rejected her proposal to live together. Then W.T. Stead sent her for review a copy of Madame Blavatsky's "Isis Unveiled" when Annie Besant declared that she had found a faith both rational and super rational, so she started for India in 1893 and became a Theosophist.

In 2 years she supplanted Blavatsky and became head of that body and, finding fame she turned against her own country, founded the Hindu College in Benares and eventually was forced to leave on account of one of the leaders, went to Madras and took up Home Rule for India. There is much that can be said about Annie Besant who made numerous changes in affection, principles, religion, and politics but did more than a little good for India.

### **A coronet in her powder box**

In conclusion, marriages among Europeans in India were free from divorces and far more binding than they are today. If, according to Napoleon, every soldier has a Field-Marshal's



baton in his haversack, it is more true to say that every woman has a coronet in her powder box.

Many who married in their early days when in subordinate positions, find as they get on that their wives are incapable of rising with them. After conferring a Knighthood on an official the first Lord Lytton declared—"I have done what the Almighty could not accomplish—I have turned Mrs. So-and-So into a Lady." Strange as it may seem women do not change in disposition when marrying above their position in society. That may be due to the treatment of better-brought up women, which soured the mind.

When entering into the blameless life of domestic peace many find that marriage is a field of battle; not a bed of roses. It is easier to make a man happy in Heaven than to make him happy with a woman. If there are disadvantages before marriage they are like gravel in a shoe—the longer the road, the more galling it grows. Marriage makes us more broadminded; bachelors have their change of life too—they turn into old maids. There is nothing in life better for woman or man than a normal marriage, so my advice, is, marry as soon as you can afford it," advised an old spinster in the last century". Few people preserve their complexion after a few years in India ; most of them wear badly. I remember a planter's wife telling me with tears in her eyes that her 13-year old daughter whom she had not seen for five years said, "O Mother, how ugly you are !"

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The Merchants of London in the year 1600 having joined together, and made a stock of seventy two thousand Pounds to be employed in ships and Merchandizes, for the discovery of trade in the East Indies, they bought out four large ships. Of those ships Hector was one, of three hundred tons and one hundred and eight men. During the third voyage under the command of Capt. Keeling, one of the Ships named Hector under Capt. Hawkins got separated from the rest of the fleet and touched at Surat.—H. S. Bhatia's *Military History of British India*

2. The first European ladies who made the voyage to India were Portuguese. According to Pietro Della Valle, who visited India in 1623,



we learn that the King of Portugal took upon himself to send a small annual investment of female orphans to India, for the especial use of the settlers on the western coast:—, 'Poor, but well descended orphans,' he writes, "which were wont to be sent from Portugal every year at the King's charge with a dowry which the king gives them, to the end they may be married in India, in order to further the peopling of the Portugal colonies in those parts." Of the first adventures among English ladies we can find no account. At the time of the Black Hole affair (1756), there were several ladies in Calcutta. One an East Indian, was among the sufferers; but we know not what the others who were carried off safely to the shipping, may have been. Mr. Ives, in 1757, tells us that the supercargo of the Futtay Salaam died at Galle, his "illness being occasioned by a cold he caught in dancing with some ladies who were just arrived from Europe."

A Madras correspondent writes to Mr. Hicky in July 1780:—"In my last I sent you an account of the number of ladies which had arrived in the late ships; there came eleven in one vessel; too great a number for the peace and good order of a round house. Millinery must rise at least 25 per cent., for the above ladies when they left England, were well stocked with head-dresses of different kinds, formed to the highest ton. But from the fortunate disputes which daily arose during the space of the three last months of the passage, they had scarce a cap left when they arrived." We find on referring to the journals of the day, that few ships arrived without bringing a little knot of spinsters, and that many of these very soon threw off their spinsterhood. The marriage announcement raise a smile. The bride is always duly gazetted as "a young lady of beauty and infinite accomplishments, recently arrived in the *Minerva*." "or an agreeable young lady who lately arrived in the *Ceres* from England."—*The Good Old Days of Honorable John Company*.

3. The Company had copied the Portuguese custom of drafting out a supply of women to their possessions in the East. They were classed as "gentle women" and 'other women'. They were not given dowries but were guaranteed their "diet" during a year in India. Trouble arose if they were still at the end of the year without husbands or sufficient money to pay their fare home. It was obviously impossible to leave them to starve, but the reluctance shown by the Company to provide them with a proper allowance and the continual haggling and bargaining had its inevitable result in a rapid deterioration of the visitors' morals. Then, with what magniloquence the President and Council deal with the situation? "Whereas some of these women are grown scandalous to our nation, religion and Government interest, we require you to give them faire warning that they do apply themselves to a more sober and christian conversation". And when even these Olympian thunders were ignored, "the sentence is that they shall be confined totally of their liberty to go abroad and fed with bread and water."—*Letters from President and Council to Deputy Governor December 18, 1675, and January 17, 1676*.



4. "Madras in the Olden Time." Thursday, 8 March, 1688.

5. The custom of sending 'spare' young ladies out to India to find husbands was the subject of a malicious poem by Thomas Hood.

By pa and Ma I'm daily told  
To marry now's the time,  
For though I'm very far from old,  
I'm rather in my prime.  
They say while we have any sun  
we ought to make our hay-  
And India has so hot a one  
I'm going to Bombay.....

And ends:—

My heart is full, my trunks as well,  
My mind and caps made up,  
My corsets shaped by Mrs Bell  
Are promised ere I sup;  
With boots and shoes, Riverta's best,  
And dresses by Duce,  
And a Special License in my chest  
I'm going to Bombay.....—*Mem Sahibs*

6. Sophia Goldbourne one of the fair few, wrote home that 'the attention and court paid to me was astonishing. My smile was meaning and my articulation melody; in a word, mirrors are almost useless in Calcutta and self-adoration idle, for your looks are reflected in the pleasures of every beholder and your claims to first-rate distinction confirmed by all who approach you.'—*Mem Sahibs*

7. In instances where soldiers' wives become widows, and which are of very frequent occurrences, they know that the Government allowance will only be continued to them for six months after their husbands' death, and that at the expiration of that period one of two alternatives awaits them either to be left utterly without the means of obtaining even the barest necessities of life, or marry. Under such circumstances, love or regard for the object of their choice is considered to be by no means necessary; in fact there is too good reason to believe that when soldiers are affected with redious illness, which from its nature appears likely to terminate fatally, the affectionate wives of their bosom are even then taking steps calculated to render their period of mourning and widowhood as short as circumstances will permit.  
—*Honorable John Company.*



## CHAPTER 2

# Women Bring Morality to European Settlers<sup>1</sup>

MISS ROBERTS

Morality appears to have advanced, steadily in England with the reign of George the Third. During his reign, men ceased to make an open business of licentiousness; they ceased to consider it a grace in a gentleman to interlard his common discourse with blasphemies and indecencies; they ceased to drink; in a great measure, they ceased to gamble; and vice began "to pay homage to virtue" by hiding itself in dark places. Men learnt to conceal that of which before it had been the fashion to boast; and the accomplishments which erst made a man's character in process of time came to un-make it. All this was not achieved in a year or in a score of years; it was the gradually progressing work of that half a century, which elapsed between the ascension and the death of George the Third.

### **Early Europeanmen bring vices**

Throughout a long series of years, the English in India, as moral beings, lagged far behind their brethren in Europe. Time was, when they imported into their eastern settlements all the vices and none of the virtues of Christians: when Christianity was looked upon by the natives of Hindostan only as another name for irreligion and immorality; when to be a Christian was, in their estimation, to be lustful, rapacious, cruel; a loud and angry sot; a contemner of God and as courage to his fellows.



Little by little, this stigma wore away: but slow indeed was the progress of decency and morality until towards the close of the last century. We have said that morality advanced in England with the reign of George the Third. We may date the rapid and substantial improvement in the social condition of the English in India from the arrival of the Marquis of Cornwallis. With the accession of that virtuous nobleman to the Government of British India, a new social era commenced; and though it would be unreasonable to assert that this great social reformation was brought about by the sole influence of this one man's personal character, it would be equally unreasonable to deny that such a character in a ruler must have greatly conduced to the change. Clive and Hastings had left England, as mere boys. They brought with them to India no settled principles; their morals accordingly were Eastern morals formed in the worst possible school. Neither one nor the other could have exercised any but a bad influence upon the social condition of their countrymen in the East; but Cornwallis brought with him to India all the finest characteristics of a high-minded English nobleman; he came among his exiled countrymen with English ideas of honor and morality; and from the day of his arrival up to the present time there has been a steady, progressive, uninterrupted improvement in the character of the English in India—an improvement which has placed us, at the present day, at least on a level with our countrymen in the West.

#### European and Indian morals

Of the social history of the first European settlers in India but few records remain. Such as they are, the picture which they present to us is a most discouraging one. Honest-minded travellers returned to England, after exploring, then almost a *terra incognita*, the provinces of "East India," and especially the territories of "the Great Mogul", to narrate how Christian men in a Heathen land were put to shame by the benighted natives; to descant on the gentleness, the fidelity, the temperance of the gentiles, and the violence, the rapacity, the licentiousness of the Europeans. It is remarkable, that almost all the earliest travellers speak, in the highest terms, of the native character; commending the friendly feeling exhibited by both Hindoos and Mahomedans to the few scattered Europeans,



who found their way beyond the coast; and not unfrequently descanting upon the sorry return which they kindly manifestations elicited. An intelligent gentleman, who accompanied Sir Thomas Roe, early in the seventeenth century to the Court of the Great Mogul, and who furnished an account of what he saw and did, which was held in high repute at the time of its publication (1665), gives a chapter on "the most excellent moralities which are to be observed amongst the people of those nations," wherein he takes occasion to contrast the behaviour of the Heathen with that of the Christian man. After commenting on the industry and punctuality of the natives, in the xivth section of his Memoir,<sup>2</sup> he adds, "This appears much in their justness manifested unto those, who trade with them" for if a man will put it into their consciences to sell the commodities he desires to buy at as low a rate as he can afford it, they will deal squarely and honestly with him; but if in those bargainings a man offers them much less than their set price, they will be apt to say, what dost thou think me a European, that I would go about to deceive thee? It is a most sad and horrible thing to consider, what scandal there is brought upon the European men, by the looseness and remissness, by the exorbitances of many, which come amongst them, who profess themselves Christians, of whom I have often heard the natives, who live here near the port where our ships arrive say thus, in broken English, which they have gotten, Christian religion, devil religion; Christian much drunk; Christian much do wrong; much beat, much abuse others: But to return unto the people of East India: though the Christians, which come amongst them, do not do such horrible things, yet they do enough to make Christianity itself evil spoken of; as a religion that deserves more to be abhorred, than embraced, for truly it is a sad sight there to behold a drunken European and a sobber Indian; a temperate Indian and a European given up to his appetite. An Indian that is just and square in his dealing; a European not so; a laborious Indian and an idle European; as if he were born only to fold his arms, or fruges tantum consumere natus; to devour corn, and wear out wool. O what a sad thing it is for Christians to come short of Indians, even in moralities come short of those, who themselves believe to come short of heaven." And again, in another place, this writer sets down as one of the principal



Little by little, this stigma wore away: but slow indeed was the progress of decency and morality until towards the close of the last century. We have said that morality advanced in England with the reign of George the Third. We may date the rapid and substantial improvement in the social condition of the English in India from the arrival of the Marquis of Cornwallis. With the accession of that virtuous nobleman to the Government of British India, a new social era commenced; and though it would be unreasonable to assert that this great social reformation was brought about by the sole influence of this one man's personal character, it would be equally unreasonable to deny that such a character in a ruler must have greatly conduced to the change. Clive and Hastings had left England, as mere boys. They brought with them to India no settled principles; their morals accordingly were Eastern morals formed in the worst possible school. Neither one nor the other could have exercised any but a bad influence upon the social condition of their countrymen in the East; but Cornwallis brought with him to India all the finest characteristics of a high-minded English nobleman; he came among his exiled countrymen with English ideas of honor and morality; and from the day of his arrival up to the present time there has been a steady, progressive, uninterrupted improvement in the character of the English in India—an improvement which has placed us, at the present day, at least on a level with our countrymen in the West.

#### European and Indian morals

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instructions to the growth of Christianity in the East, "the most debauched lives of many coming thither, or living amongst them who profess themselves Christians, per quorum latera patitur evangelium, by whom the gospel of Jesus Christ is scandalised and exceedingly suffers."

### European association affects Indians

It would not be uninteresting to investigate the extent to which the morality of the natives of India has been elevated or deteriorated by European associations. We are afraid that the enquiry would not lead to such satisfactory results, as we could desire; and we cannot, at all events on the present occasion, suffer ourselves to prosecute it. One quotation, however, we cannot resist making. The extract is from Forbes' *Oriental Memoirs*, and we give it for the purpose of showing that in the opinion of that excellent and experienced man, patriarchal influences were at work, for good, even in his time, in places not penetrated by the British.

"I sometimes frequented places where the natives had never seen an European, and were ignorant of every thing concerning us: there I beheld manners and customs simple as were those in the patriarchal age; there is the very style of Rebecca and the damsels of Mesopotamia, the Hindoo villagers treated me with that artless hospitality so delightful in the poems of Homer, and other ancient records. On a sultry day, near a Zinore village, having rode faster than my attendants, while waiting their arrival under a tamarind tree, a young woman came to the well; I asked for a little water, but neither of us having a drinking vessel, she hastily left me, as I imagined, to bring an earthen cup for the purpose, as I should have polluted a vessel of metal; but as Jacl, when Sisera asked for water, "gave him milk, and brought forth butter in a lordly dish—Judges ch. v. ver. 25, so did this village damsel, with more sincerity than Heber's wife, bring me a pot of milk, and a lump of butter on the delicate leaf of the banana, "the lordly dish" of the Hindoos. The former I gladly accepted; on my declining the latter, she immediately made it up into two balls, and gave me one to each of the oxen that drew my hackery. Butter is a luxury to these animals, and enables them to bear additional fatigue."



"The more I saw of the Hindoos in those remote districts, the more I perceived the truth of Orme's remarks that Hindostan has been inhabited from the earliest antiquity, by a people who have no resemblance, either in their figure, or manners, with any of the nations contiguous to them; and that although conquerors have established themselves at different times, in various parts of India, yet the original inhabitants have lost very little of their original character."

It must, however, be admitted that our Portfolio contains more than one passage, which might, in all fairness, be quoted as a set-off to the above. If in the old times, there were scenes of patriarchal simplicity, there were also scenes of fearful immorality, which in these days never greet our eyes. Take the following, from the Travels of John Mandelslo,<sup>3</sup> as a proof of the atrocities which were sometimes perpetrated by petty native princes, even in the presence of "principal directors of the English and Dutch trade." The Governor of Ahmedabad getting merry with his English and Dutch friends, "sent for twenty women-dancers," and when these had danced themselves out, he sent for another set. This other set refused to come; upon which the Governor had them brought forcibly before him. They made a frank confession of the cause of their which contumacy need not be here repeated; and then we are told.

"He (the Governor) laughed at it, but immediately commanded out a party of his guard and ordered their heads to be struck off. They begged their lives with horrid cries and lamentations; but he would be obeyed, and caused the execution to be done in the room before all the company—not one of the Lords then present daring to make the least intercession for those wretches, who were eight in number. The strangers were startled at the horror of the spectacle and inhumanity of the action; which the Governor taking notice of fell a-laughing and asked them what they were so much startled at."

### State of morality in high places

It is only from incidental allusions in the few works of travel and fewer political memoirs, which our ancestors have bequeathed to us, that we can gain any insight into the moral condition of the English in India, previous to the conquest of Bengal. Many writers, who have described the rise and progress



of the different East India Companies, have given us somewhat startling accounts of the official rapacity of our predecessors—of the fierce contentions of the rival companies, of their unscrupulous conduct towards the Natives, and towards each other—of their commercial dishonesty, their judicial turpitude,<sup>4</sup> and their political injustice—all these things are broadly stated; but to the immorality of their private life we have little but indistinct allusions. The pranks played by the different Governors, of whose administrations we know little, might have induced even Burke to acknowledge, that the worst offences imputed to Hastings were, contrasted with the eccentricities of some of his predecessors, distinguished by consummate purity and tenderness. One of these Governors (Sir John Gayer) who was sent out, as a picked man, to supersede another, who had been misconducting himself, not liking to reside at Bombay, the proper seat of government, because he found he could make more money at Surat, contrived to get himself taken prisoner by the Governor of the latter place, and thus, whilst disgracing his country, feathered his own nest. Sir Nicholas Waite, who succeeded Gayer, conducted himself so badly that the inhabitants of Bombay kicked him out of the country. "The looseness of his morals, his bare-faced injustice and prevarication. provoked the inhabitants and soldiery at Bombay to such a degree, that they seized him and sent him prisoner to England."<sup>5</sup>

We find it difficult to obtain a clear view of the state of English society in India, during the second quarter of the last century. There are some anecdotes of doubtful authenticity, though sufficiently characteristic both of the man and the times in which he lived, extant in some of the Dictionary biographies of Clive, which show that gambling and fighting were no unusual employments among the English at Madras. Clive gambled; was cheated by an officer; accused his adversary of fraud, was called out by the sharper; and refusing to retract, even with a pistol at his head, had a narrow escape of being murdered thus inviting displeasure of the Governor, being found guilty. On another occasion it is related that a brother officer having accused him of cowardice, Clive challenged the slanderer, who struck him on the way to the meeting-place—fine examples both of the gentlemanly feeling, which then existing in the



army—Mr. Verelst, however, in a farewell minute, drew, with reference to about the same period, a very complacent sketch of the civilians of Bengal—"We looked no farther than the provision of the Company's investment. We wought advantages to our trade with the ingenuity, I may add, selfishness, of merchants.....All our servants and dependants were trained and educated in the same notions; the credit of a good bargain was the utmost scope of their ambition." Calcutta, according to Mr. Verelst, must, in those days, have been a sort of commercial Arcadia!

### Back in England

And when these men returned to England, with their hoarded wealth, what was their social position? With unlimited means of purchasing enjoyment, they could find no enjoyments to purchase. They were isolated; and they were unhappy. First came disappointment—then discontent. The climate—the people the social customs—all were strange and distasteful to them. They collected around them harpies and parasites—for where will not the sun of wealth draw forth a fungus-growth of such minions?—they squandered money on ridiculous follies; they exhibited in their own persons a vanity still more ridiculous; they aimed at a costly extravagance, to outshine the old aristocrats, who despised them; and died at last unregretted by a single relative or friend. They, who were not bent on plucking the Nabob, religiously kept aloof from him. A sort of superstitious awe attached to his person; and many looked upon him, as an unholy being, doomed to drag out a miserable existence haunted by the grim shadows of his victims and tortured by relentless furies. If he shut himself up on his own premises, it was said of him that he shunned the light of day, and rustic ignorance drew strange pictures of unhallowed rites and unearthly ceremonies within the precincts of the Nabob's domain. If he wandered abroad, it was said of him that he was endeavouring to escape out of himself—to drown the fearful memory of the past. Everywhere he was a mark for popular odium; on the stage; in the novel; in the rhetorical harangues of the Parliamentary orator—and the greater part of this too, on no better authority than that of the cheek sallowed; the eye dimmed; the frame wasted, by disease; the spirits depressed



and the temper soured by a constant recurrence of wearing pain; and the outward bearing rendered cold and repulsive by the imperfect sympathy, and the unceasing distrust of his new neighbours. The Nabob was far from a faultless being—nay it must in candour be admitted, that he was some degrees lower down in the scale of humanity, than his home-staying brethren, who had been exposed to less deteriorating influences—but still he was the victim of much manifest injustice and the wrongs, which he may have committed in one hemisphere, were amply revisited upon him in the other. His very sufferings were arrayed in judgment against him. The ravages, which pain and sickness and toil beneath a scorching sun had committed upon his frame; the strangeness of manner which long absence from home and much intercourse with a foreign people had naturally induced the eagerness, with which he sought by lavish expenditure and luxurious profusion to compensate for the absence of friendship and kindly sympathy—all these things, the misfortunes of the returned exile, were imputed to him as grave offences; and sober moralists held up their hands without the charity even feebly to acknowledge.

#### A woeful tale of Anglo-Indian love

Let us at least hang up one picture in illustration of what we in the opposition to prevailing notions, venture to suggest. We take it from one of the many interesting and instructive notes to the *Adventurer in the Punjab*:

Major H. was an officer in the king's service on the Madras presidency, some thirty or forty years ago. He became attached to a native lady, named Fyzoo; never I believe regarded her with any but honorable views and married her. She bore him three children (one of whom is now an officer in the army) and died, leaving the youngest an infant, who bore the mother's name. Major H. quitted India upon the death of his wife and brought her remains with him to England in a leaden coffin. Shortly after his arrival, the little Fyzoo likewise died, and her father had her remains in the same manner preserved.

Every circumstance in Major H.'s story was peculiar, and took great hold of my imagination when in my early youth, I came from a remote country place to the part of Surrey where he had his residence. It was an old brick house with pointed



roofs, massive window frames, tall narrow doors, winding stairs, dark passages and all other approved materials for a regular haunted house. A high brick wall with a dead gate, surrounded the garden in which the house stood; all was in character, the straight turf walks, the clipped yews, the noble Linden trees, and the look of neglect and wildness that pervaded every thing on ringing for admission, the gate used to be opened by an old woman whose appearance was enough to rouse all sorts of strange ideas in the mind of an urchin fresh from the country. She had been the nurse of little Fyzoo, and had in that capacity attended her charge to England. As such she was much valued by her master and continued to live with him till his death. I well remember her shrivelled black face, her white hair and emaciated form (with her Indian dress, that was in itself a curiosity to my young eyes,) and her broken English. I believe Major H. was never seen outside the walls of his garden, and he had so cut himself off from all his relations and friends, that it was not generally known that in that old house, he kept enshrined the bodies of his wife and daughter. His two elder children as they grew up, went to live with other relatives, and his sole companion was an old widow lady, as eccentric as himself. In a room within his own a bed was laid out covered with rich Indian silks, and fancifully decorated; on that bed lay the mother and child in their long last sleep; and in this room Major H. passed the greater part of his time. This, I believe, is the simple narrative, but of course much of mystery and exaggeration was added to the stories circulated of the three singular characters, who inhabited the old house, and the supernatural beings who were suspected to reside with them.

At length Major H. died after about twenty years of this strange existence. His death was quite sudden, and so many suspicions had been connected with his seclusion, that an inquest was held on his body. Thus the scenes that had so long been shrouded from the public ken, were thrown open; when the officials came to examine the house the two coffins were brought to light and this discovery of the remains of two beings caused a further investigation.

It was a strange scene; on a cold December day, that old house thrown open to all whom curiosity might lead there, the



bustling migistrates and their satellites peeping and peering into every cranny for a solution of the mysteries. The old lady, and the still older *dyhe*, fitting like ghosts, about the deserted shrine, their strange tale long disbelieved by the authorities, while there lay the unconscious causes of this tumult. The hardly cold body of the old soldier, the long crumbled dust of his Eastern bride, and of their infant child. At length the Coroner was obliged to receive the real story, however incredible it seemed; and the three bodies were committed to one grave.

As to the validity of a marriage, such as the above, it was in this instance proved; for, the succession to Major H.'s property was disputed by others of the family, on the ground of his son's illegitimacy; and the law decided in the young man's favour."

The reader will not quarrel with us, we are sure, for giving him, as a companion to the foregoing, a picture of a less gloomy character. In the above, we have shown the terrible—and now we proceed to show the ridiculous side of the Nabob at Home. The sketch is taken from the autobiography of M. Grand, the gentleman, whose beautiful young wife—afterwards the *soi-disante Princesse de Talleyrand*—was seduced by one of the ablest, but most unprincipled men of the last century, Philip Francis—a man without one spark of honesty or one feeling of a gentleman—a low cross between the bully and the sneak. Grand was originally in the Army; but through the interest of Hastings, he had obtained a more lucrative appointment, and was, when Francis was caught in his house, during the first year of his marriage, Secretary to the Salt Committee.

### Slow growth of morality

Slow indeed was the growth of religion and genuine morality among the English in India. Hospitality, kindliness, generosity—nay even a sort of decorousness, which might have been mistaken for something better, sprung up among our people; but it was long before Christian piety and its fair fruits to bless our adopted land. The natives—and no wonder—marvelled whether the British acknowledged any God. "These people", writes Mr. Forbes, "in their own artless expressive style often



asked me this important question—Master, when an Englishman dies, does he think he shall go to his God?

"I believe I before mentioned to you," writes Mr. Shore, in a letter to his mother, "the too great prevalance of immorality in this settlement, and I wish I could now advise you of an amendment. Were these sentiments divulged, not the uncontroverted truth of them would be sufficient to guard the singularity of my censures from ridicule... You will, perhaps, conclude from the disregard with which Religion is treated, that the number of Ree-thinkers must be great they are in fact but "few". In a letter (1775), Mr. Shore observes, "Dancing, riding, hunting, shooting, are now our employments. In proportion as the inhabitants of this settlement have increased we are become much less sociable and hospitable then formerly." To the list of amusement here noted, he might have added gambling and horse-racing, drinking and fighting duels.

#### Warren Hastings not a moral man

It would indeed be difficult to imagine anything much worse than the state of Society, during the administration of Warren Hastings. The earlier adventurers may have committed more heinous crimes, and been participators in scenes of more offensive debauchery; but in those more remote times, the English in India were too few and too scattered—their habits were of too migratory a character to admit of the formation of anything worthy to be spoken of as Society. There was certainly Society at the chief presidency, during the administration of Warren Hastings; but in candour we must acknowledge it to have been most offensively bad Society. Hastings himself, whatever may have been his character as a political ruler, had no great title to our admiration as a moral man. He was living, for years, with the wife of another, who lacking the spirit of a cock-chaffer, connived with all imaginable sang-froid at the transfer of his wife's person to the possession of the Nabob, and when the convenient laws of a foreign land, deriving no sanction from Christianity, formally severed the bond, which had long been practically disregarded, the Governor-General had the execrably bad taste to celebrate his marriage with the elegant adulteress in a style of the utmost magnificence, attended with open display and festal rejoicing.



What was to be expected from the body of Society, when the head was thus morally diseased? Francis was a hundred-fold worse than Hastings. The latter was weak under a pressure of temptation; he was not disposed to "pay homage to virtue," by throwing a cloak over his vice; and did not sufficiently consider the bad influence, which his conduct was calculated to exercise over Society at large. In him, it is true, there was a sad want of principle, but in Francis an evil principle was ever at work. His vices were all active vices—deliberate, ingenious, laborious. His lust was, like his malice, un-impulsive, studious, given to subtle contrivances; demanding the exercise of high intellectual ability. When he addressed himself to the deliberate seduction of Madame Grand, he brought all the mental energy and subtlety of matured manhood to bear upon the unsuspecting virtue of an inexperienced girl of sixteen.—Here, indeed, were leaders of Society; not only corrupting the morals but disturbing the peace of the Presidency. The very members of the Supreme Council, in those days, could not refrain from shooting at each other. Barwell and Clavering went out.—The latter had accused the former of dishonesty; and the former in return had called his associate "a liar."—They met; but the contest was a blood-less one. Not so, that between Hastings and Francis. The Governor General shot the Councillor though the body and thus wound up, in this country, to be renewed in another, the long struggle between the two antagonists. Such was the Council. The Supreme Court exercised no more benign influence over the morals of Society.

#### **Corrupt and cruel**

Sir Elijah Impey, the Chief Justice, was a model of rapacity and injustice—corrupt as he was cruel and other not far below him in rank were equally near him in infamy. Viewing the whole picture, with an unprejudiced eye, it is assuredly a most disheartening one. In 1780 was published the first Indian newspaper—Hicky's Gazette. If any one desire to satisfy himself, beyond the reach of all inward questionings, that what we have stated in general terms of the low moral tone of Society, at that period, is unexaggerated truth, let him turn over the pages of that same Hicky's Gazette. Society must



have been very bad to have tolerated such a paper. It is full of infamous scandal.

### **Drinking was common**

Drinking had long been one of the rational amusements, with which our fathers sought to beguile the time. Arrack punch would seem to have been the first beverage to which the English in India addicted themselves and it often proved to be the last.<sup>6</sup> At a later period there was a kind of Persian wine much in favor, which Mr. Ives (1757) tells us was supplied by the Company to its servants at the Western factories; and was "the best he ever tasted, except claret." It was not very long, however, before European beers and wines were imported, and consumed by those, who could afford to pay the high prices then fixed on these now most accessible beverages. Punch and sherbet, being always cheap, were the common drinks of the young military men; and pretty freely were they consumed, at all hours from morning to night. Mr. Forbes tells us that, when he first arrived at Bombay, in 1765, "the cadets who were soon promoted, and whether stationed at the presidency or the sub-ordinate settlements, perhaps mounted guard once or twice a week and did no other duty, had abundance of leisure time. On those idle days, the morning was generally occupied in calling upon each other at their different quarters, and at each visit taking a draught of punch, or arrack and water, which however cool and pleasant at the moment was succeeded by the most deleterious effects, indeed, from its fatal consequences, it might be called a slow poison; and from this cause alone it may be confidently asserted that a number proportionate to the Berhampore estimate were annually committed to an untimely grave."

### **Dance—a pleasure for ladies**

We have now before us detailed accounts of two grand balls—one given in 1781, the other in 1788. In the former, we are told that the ladies took their departure, "accompanied by the dangles, at about half past 12;" while the "jolly bucks remained behind to seek for charms in the sparkling juice of the grape, who like the true sons of Bacchus and Comus kept



it up until four and in all probability their happiness had continued until Sol in his journey towards the West had bid them good morning, had they not been disturbed by two carping sons of Mars, who began to quarrel." Then comes an account of altercation, a pugilistic encounter, and a denouement, as offensively gross in description as any thing we have ever seen in print. In the other, we are told, that "the ball opened about half past 9 in the evening, which was graced with a numerous assemblage of ladies.—The dances continued till near 12, when his Lordship(Cornwallis) and the Company adjourned to supper. The pleasures of the dance are always preferred by the ladies, and the repast afforded but a short interruption to their renewing them, which consequently attracted their partners and left the solitary swains to the enjoyment of the bottle, though to the praise of their moderation it must be observed, that the dancing room seemed to engage the most of their attention". This was no small improvement; for only a few years before, dancing was not thought to be possible after supper. There was room, doubtless, for a great deal more improvement, for even in these comparatively decorous accounts we see somewhat too much of 'choice spirits' and "votaries of Bacchus;" but the change must have been considerable, for we find a public Journal—the India Gazette (1788) commenting editorially upon the palpable improvement in the state of Society and congratulating the settlement upon it:—

"We are not surprised at the various changes of Fashion, as they arise from Fancy or Caprice, but the alteration of manners must be derived from a superior source; and when we find that the pleasures of the Bottle, and the too prevailing Enticements of Play, are now almost universally sacrificed to the far superior attractions of female Society, can we fail to ascribe the pleasing and rational distinction to that more general diffusion of taste and politeness which the company and Conversation of Ladies must ever inspire? this was the sentiment of the all-accomplished Chesterfield; and there are few who were better acquainted with the science of attaining the Graces."

This we think may be accepted as a very fair indication of the period, at which a palpable improvement in the social



morality of the English in India first began to be discernible. It will be gathered from the above extract, that before the close of 1788 gambling<sup>7</sup> and drinking had gone out of fashion."

#### **Native woman as mistress**

But in spite of these assertions; there is a disheartening picture of domestic life at the commencement of the present century. Capt. Williamson devotes no small portion of the first volume of his work 'Vade Mecum' to a dissertation on native women; he gives a detailed account of the expenses attending the keep of a mistress; and devotes no less than fifty pages to a catalogue of the ornaments worn and unguents used by these ladies. He thinks it rather a joke than otherwise that European gentlemen should keep harems—"I have known," he says "various instances of two ladies being conjointly domesticated, and one of an elderly military character, who solaced himself with no less than sixteen of all sorts and sizes. Being interrogated by a friend as to what he did with a number, 'Oh', replied he, 'I give them a little rice and let them run about.' This same gentleman, when paying his addresses to an elegant young woman lately arrived from Europe, but who was informed by the lady at whose house she was residing of the state of affairs, the description closed with "Pray, my dear, how should you like to share a sixteenth of Major." And this is a sample of the state of affairs, which in 1810 was supposed to call for anything but censure.

#### **Influx of European ladies**

In considering this interesting subject of the social character of the English in India, there are few points of greater importance than that touched upon above—the influx of European ladies into the country and the facilities thus afforded for the formation of honorable connections. Capt. Williamson says, that in 1810, the entire number of European women did not exceed two hundred and fifty, and that the difficulty of forming matrimonial engagements drove men into licentious connections. Writing fourteen years before Capt. Williamson, the Rev. Mr. Tennatt says, "Formerly female adventurers were



few but highly successful. Emboldened by this success and countenanced by their example such numbers have embarked in this speculation as threaten to defeat its purpose. The irregularities of our Government which formerly afforded an opportunity to some of rapidly accumulating wealth and enabling them to marry, are now done away. Few in comparison now find themselves in circumstances that invite to matrimonial engagements ; hence a number of unfortunate females are seen wandering for years in a single and unconnected state. Some are annually forced to abandon the forlorn hope and return to Europe, after the loss of beauty, too frequently their only property."

#### Annual investment of female orphans

The first European ladies, who made the voyage to India, were Portuguese. The earliest mention of the residence of fair strangers from the west, which he have been able to find in any work open to our researches, is contained in the travels of Pietro Della Valle, an Italian gentleman, or as he is described in the translation "a noble Roman" who visited the country in 1623.—According to this authority, the King of Portugal took upon himself to send a small annual investment of female orphans to India, for the special use of the settlers on the western coast. "We were no sooner come to the Dogana," says the noble Roman, after describing his voyage to Surat, "but the news of our arrival was, I think, by Sig. Alberto's means, carried to the house of the Dutch, many of which have wives there which they married in India purposely to go with them and people a new colony of theirs in Java Major, which they call Batavia Nova; where very great privileges are granted to such of their countrymen as shall go to live there with their wives and families; for which end many of them, for want of European, have taken Indian, Armenian, and Syrian women, and of any other race that falls into their hands, so they be or can be made Christians. Last year the fleet of the Portugals, which went to India, was encountered at sea, and partly sunk, partly taken by the Hollanders; amongst other booty, three maidens were taken of those poor but well descended orphans, which are wont to be sent from Partugal every year at the king's charge, with a dowry which the king gives them, to the



end they may be married in India, in order to further the peopling of the Portugal colonies in those parts. These three virgins falling into the hands of the Hollanders and being carried to Surat, which is the principal seat of all their traffick, the most eminent merchants amongst them strove who should marry them, being all passably handsome. Two of them were gone from Surat, whether to the above said colony or elsewhere I know not. She that remained behind as called Donna Lucia, a young woman, fair enough, and wife to one of the wealthies and eminentest Hollanders". Of English ladies we can find no mention in the 'noble Roman's' book. Signor Della Valle, who it appears was accompanied by his wife and a young Italian lady, his adopted daughter, tells us, that though, on landing at Surat, he was immediately invited to the house of the English president, he declined the invitation, "for that it was requisite for Signora Mariuccia to be amongst women, of which there was none in the English House". Of the evils resulting from the scarcity of women, even amongst the Portuguese, he gives us, in another place, a somewhat distressing picture. Incestuous intermarriages were by no means uncommon. "The Portugals," he writes "who, in matter of Government look with great diligence upon the least motes, without making much reckoning afterwards of great beams, held in inconvenient for the said Moriam Tinatim to live with me in the same house although she had been brought up always in our House, from a very little child, and as our own daughter. For being themselves in these matters very unrestrained (not sparing their nearest kindred, nor as I have heard their own sisters, much less Foster-children in their houses) they conceive that all other nations are like themselves," A French Traveller, "Monsieur Dillon, M.D." who published his Voyage to the East Indies, towards the close of the seventeenth century, does not give us a much more favourable account of the Portuguese ladies. "There are very few," he says, "but what are sufficiently sensible that the Portugueses in general have these three qualities belonging to them. To be zealous to the highest degree of superstition; to be amorous to a degree of madness; and jealous beyond all reason. Neither will it appear strange, if the ladies of Goa are as tractable and obliging to handsome men, as those of Lisbon. 'Tis true they are watched as narrowly as is



possible to be done, but they seldom want wit to deceive their keepers, when they are resolved to taste of the forbidden fruit; and they are the most revengeful creatures in the world, if they happen to be disappointed in the expectation!" Monsieur Dillon supports, this assertion with some anecdotes to show the fearfully lax state of morality among the first European settlers to show what sort of example was set by their predecessors to the English in India.

### European ladies live merrily

At the commencement of the present century there were French and Dutch women in Bombay, and that even the English Governors sometimes took out their wives and families. At the time of the Black Hole affairs (1756) there were several ladies in Calcutta. One, an East Indian, was among the sufferers, but we know not what the others, who were carried safely off to the shipping, may have been.<sup>8</sup> Mr. Ives, in 1757, tells us, that the supercargo of the *Futta Salaam*, died at Galle, his 'illness being occasioned by a cold he caught in dancing with some ladies who were just arrived from Europe'. At Tellicherry he tells us that he dined with "the Company's Chief," "Mr. Hodges, a married man, who introduced him and his companions "to every gentleman and lady in the settlement." We learn from Captain Sartorius, that when he visited Bengal in 1771, there was a moderate supply of ladies both at the English and the Dutch factories. He was necessarily more competent to speak of the character of the latter than of our British fair ones—but we fear that there is not much reason to believe that we very much excelled our neighbours.—"Domestic peace and tranquillity," he writes, with reference to the Dutch at Chinsurah, "must be purchased by a shower of jewels, a wardrobe of the richest clothes, and a kingly parade of plate upon the side-board; the husband must give all these, or, according to a vulgar phrase, the house would be too hot to hold him, while the wife never pays the least attention to her domestic concerns; but suffers the whole to depend upon her servants or slaves. The women generally rise between eight and nine o'clock. The forenoon is spent in paying visits to their friends, or in lolling upon a sofa with their arms across. Dinner is ready at half past one, they go to sleep till half past four or



five; they then dress in form, and the evening and part of the night is spent in company, or at dancing parties, which are frequent during the cold season". There is more of this; but we have quoted enough. Of the English ladies he tells us little except that they wore very fine dresses. He attended a Ball, at the Governor's, which was opened by the Governor's lady (Mrs. Cartier,) and the Dutch Director; and at which we are told the "company were very numerous and all magnificently dressed, especially the ladies who were decorated with immense quantities of jewels." A few years afterwards, when the elegant Marian, held her court at Belvedere, Calcutta seems to have rejoiced in a sprinkling of the fair sex, if not sufficiently profuse to blunt the devoted gallantry of their knights, quite enough to humanise society. Thus a Madras correspondent writes to "Mr. Hicky," in July, 1780, "In my last I sent you an account of the number of ladies, which has arrived in the late ships, there came eleven in one vessel—too great a number for the peace, and good order of a Round House—Militnery must rise at least 25 per cent., for the above ladies, when they left England were well stocked with head dresses of different kinds, formed to the highest ton. But from the unfortunate disputes, which daily arose during the space of the three last months of the passage, they had scarce a cap left when they arrived"—and describing a Grand Christmas party, at Government House, in a later number, we find it set down, that "The ladies were all elegant and lovely, and it is universally allowed, that Calcutta never was decorated by so many fine women as at present." We find on referring to the Journals of the day that few ships arrived without bringing a little knot of spinsters; and that many of these very soon threw off their spinsterhood. The marriage announcements raise a smile. The bride is always duly gazetted as "a young lady of beauty and infinite accomplishments recently arrived by the Minerva;" or "an agreeable young lady who lately arrived in the Ceres from England." M. Grand, in his interesting narrative of his residence in India, gives an amusingly naive picture of the knightly devotion with which some young ladies were regarded "In the enjoyment of such society, he writes "which was graced with the ladies of the first fashion and beauty of the settlement, I fell a convert to the charms of the celebrated Miss Sanderson, but vainly with



many others, did I sacrifice at her shrine. This amiable woman became in 1776, the wife of Mr. Richard Barwell, who well may live in the remembrance of his numerous friends. . . Of all her sex I never observed one who possessed more the art of conciliating her admirers, equal to herself. As a proof thereof, we met sixteen in her livery, one public ball evening, viz. a pea-green French frock, trimmed with pink silk and chained lace with spangles, when each of us, to whom the secret of her intended dress had been communicated buoyed himself up with the hope of being the favoured happy individual. The innocent deception, which had been practised, soon appeared evident, and the man of the most sense was the first to laugh at the ridicule which attached on him. I recollect the only revenge which we exacted, was for each to have the honor of a dance with her; and as minuets, cotillons, reels and country dances were then in vogue, with ease to herself, she obligingly complied, to all concerned and in reward for such kind complaisance, we gravely attended her home, marching by the side of her palankeen, regularly marshalled in procession of two and two." The lady, who could dance sixteen reels, country dances, &c. "with ease to herself," must have possessed an enviable stock of strength and elasticity. Our Indian Ladies appear never to have lacked energy sufficient to go cheerfully through an amount of labour in the ball-room, one half of which they would deem it, any where else, the utmost hardship to be called upon to endure. In 1773, we find them described as dancing from nine in the evening till five o'clock in the morning—and at the beginning of the present century, the ladies, according to Lord Valentia, were in the habit not unfrequently of dancing themselves into their graves. Consumptions," he writes, "are very frequent among the ladies, which I attribute, in a great measure, to their incessant dancing, even during the hottest weather. After such violent exercise they go into the verandahs and expose themselves to a cool breeze and damp atmosphere." Victim after victim was consigned to the tomb but the warning lesson was unregarded; and still the history of each new sacrifice might be fittingly told in the language of Ford's noble drama, *The Broken Heart*.

When one news straight came huddling one another  
Of death, and death, and death, still I danced on—



### Gay European society

The temptation was not to be resisted.—See, what was the state of society in those days, and judge if it was not really something worth dying<sup>9</sup> for. “The Society of Calcutta is numerous and gay; the fetes given by the Governor-General with drinks<sup>10</sup> and dances are frequent, splendid, and well arranged. The Chief Justice, the members of Council and Sir Henry Russell, each open their houses once a week for the reception of those, who have been presented to them. Independently of these, hardly a day passes, particularly during the cold season, without several large dinner-parties being formed, consisting generally of thirty or forty. . . . A subscription assembly also exists but seems unfashionable.” Now here, indeed, was work for a delicate spinster, calling loudly for a Limitation of Labour bill, to prevent young English women, in a foreign land, from killing themselves by inches! No wonder that unsophisticated natives asked why the English did not follow their custom and hire people to dance for them.

### ‘Mother Coupler’

A young lady, on first arriving in India “should have friends to receive her.” We should as soon think of writing, in the present day, that she should have shoes to her feet. The passage in the “Vade Mecum,” to which we refer, will be curious to our younger readers:—“It should be understood, that the generality of young ladies, though they may certainly comply with the will of their parents, are by no means partial to visiting India. The out-fit is not a trifle: no lady can be landed there, under respectable circumstances throughout, for less than five hundred pounds. Then, again, she should have friends to receive her; for she cannot else obtain even a lodging, or the means of procuring subsistence. It is not like a trip, per hoy, to Margate, where nothing but a well-lined purse is requisite and where, if you do not meet with friends, you may easily form acquaintances. Let us, however, suppose all these things to be done; and that some worthy dame welcomes the fair adventurer to her house, with the friendly intention of affording an asylum, until some stray bachelor may bear away the prize. We have known some instances of this, and, in particular, of a lady making it, in a manner, her study to



replenish her hospitable mansion with objects of this description; thereby acquiring the invidious, or sarcastic, designation of 'Mother Coupler'. That several have been thus sent, or, have thus adventured, round the Cape,<sup>11</sup> cannot be denied; in any other country they would have experienced the most poignant distress, both of body and of mind; but, such has ever been the liberality evinced towards this class of unfortunate persons, that, in most instances, prompt and effectual relief has been administered."

### Faithful and affectionate wife

Much has been written on the subject of the mercenary character of 'Indian marriages.' In the old times, it was believed to be, and in many instances it undoubtedly was the fact, that a young lady, carrying to India her stock of charms, put them up to the highest bidder. One has still a sort of vague confused idea of the old associations connected with those two significant words "Indian marriages"—as though they were the veriest sacrifices at the altar of Mammon, which cruelty and avarice ever plotted together to accomplish. Blooming youth and sallow, wrinkled age departing as yoke-fellows, to be a torment one to the other, through long years of jealousy, and distrust, and mutual reproaches, loathing on one side, crooked spite on the other; to end, perhaps, in guilt and desertion. The young maiden bought an establishment, it was thought, with her rosy cheeks and her bright eyes; she bartered the freshness of her young affections for gold and jewels; and woke, after a brief dream of glittering and heartless extravagance, to the true value of the splendid misery, for which she had sacrificed her youth. Then there were years of pining discontent; of fruitless self-upbraiding; luxury and profusion, as adjuncts of happiness, estimated at their true worth; then, perhaps, an old affection revived; the temptation; the opportunity; the fall; the abasement;—and this, it was thought, was an Indian marriage. Such Indian marriages there have been—and such English marriages there have been. There has been a world of blooming youth—of pure affections—sacrificed are now in all the countries of the earth—but, perhaps, these sacrifices are rarer, now-a-days, among the English in India, than among our brethren on any part of the globe.



Many a household wreck have the hills of Simla and Mussoorie looked down upon, within these last few years; many the record of misery and guilt which might be inscribed in the huge dark volume of the Annals of Separation. And yet, deploring as we do the many sad cases of conjugal infidelity, which have occurred within our own recollection, we cannot admit that they are sufficiently numerous—or that the contagion is sufficiently wide-spread—to detract from the general character of Indian domestic life. Let the English reader, who may have heard some vague stories of the immorality of our northern hill stations, picture to himself a number of young married women, whose husbands are absent, perhaps, among the mountains of Afghanistan, perhaps on the sandy plains of Sindh—gathered together in a cool, invigorating climate, with nothing in the world to do but to enjoy themselves. Then imagine a number of idle bachelors, let loose “between musters” or perhaps on leave for several months at a stretch, from Loodhianah, Kurnaul, Meerut, &c.—gay, young military men, with no more urgent, and certainly no more pleasant occupation, than to dangle after the young married women—“grass widows” as they are called—in the absence of their husbands; to amuse the fair creatures, to assist them in the great work of killing time, and finally to win their affections. Is it possible to conceive a state of things more surely calculated to result in guilt and misery?—High moral principle has ere now fallen before temptation and opportunity; and many is the fair frail creature, possessing no high principle, who would but for these temptations, these opportunities, have retained her character as a faithful and affectionate wife, and in after years been a bright example to her children. The immorality, to which we are now alluding, has been the result of peculiar combination of circumstances; and must not be regarded as a proof of any rickety and rotten in the entire fabric of our Society. Where there is flesh and blood there must be disease—moral as well as physical.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Based mainly on Miss Roberts' *Scenes and Characteristics of Hindustan*, 3 volumes, London, 1835. Other material is drawn from *The English in India* (1828) and *The Nabob's Wife* (1837).



2. We find this account appended to a translation of the travels of Sig. Pietro della Valle, to which allusion will be made in a more advanced part of this article.

3. This book was written in 1640.

4. We see it roundly stated, by an old writer, that in the Mayor's Court of Madras, "in matters of consequence a few pagodas well placed could turn the scales of justice, the cause generally going to the favoured inclination of the Governor." It is added, that as the Court had no power of inflicting capital punishment except in cases of Piracy, it was the custom often to bring other offences of a different nature under that category of crime, so that a private trader, if he has the misfortune to incur the displeasure.

5. See the continuation, by an English writer (1757) of the Abbe Guyon's History of the East Indies. Of Gayer it is further stated that "A young lady, who had no relations alive, but a portion of three thousand pounds, happened unadvisedly to marry a person she loved in a clandestine manner, contrary to the statute law of Bombay, where no marriage is binding without consent of the Governor. Gayer taking advantage of this statute dissolved the marriage, and on account of the money married her to his own son."

6. Pietro Della Valle speaks of another beverage to which our earliest settlers were addicted. "On Saturday morning," he says, "we conversed together for some time, drinking a little of hot wine boyld with cloves, cinnamon, and other spices, which the English call burnt wine, and use to drink frequently in the morning to comfort the stomach, sipping it by little and little for fear of scalding, as they do cahue (coffee) before described. And they use it particularly in the winter to warm themselves, though in India it is not necessary for that end, because albeit it was still winter, according to our seasons, yet we had more heat than cold." Our ancestors were wont to drink mulled wine in the morning.

7. We do not know the precise date at which the first regular race-meeting came off at Calcutta, or at the other Presidencies. Mr. Stocqueler, in his Handbook, says "the first record of the existence of Racing in Calcutta may be dated from the origin of the Bengal Jockey Club, in 1803" but we find in the volume of Hicky's Gazette for 1780, accounts both of races and of race-balls: A few years later they appear to have fallen into desuetude in Calcutta, though carried on with great eclat at Madras. "We have continued scenes of gaiety", writes a newspaper correspondent from that presidency, in 1788; "and may boast a competition even with your more populous settlement. The races take place soon, from which much entertainment is expected. This is an amusement, which seems to be exploded in Calcutta, as we hear no mention made of them in any of your public papers." How soon the custom was revived, we do not pretend to know—but we find Lord Valentia stating, early in the next century, that "on Lord Wellesley's first arrival in the country, he set his face decidedly against horse-racing and every other species of gambling; yet at the



end of November 1803, there were three days' races at a small distance from Calcutta."

8. One of these, a Mrs. Bowers, died in Calcutta in 1781. There is a notice of her death in Hicky's Gazette, from which we learn that during the quarter of a century intervening between the capture of Calcutta "by the Moors," and her dissolution, she did by industry and frugality acquire a large fortune, which she was so sadly afraid of losing again that she figgetted herself into her grave. She was "attended to the grave by several of the reputable inhabitants, and the last Holy office was performed over her corpse, by Stephen Bagshaw, Esq." from which we are to infer that there was no available clergyman. It is often wholly impossible to ascertain whether the wives of the European settlers alluded to, in old works, were English women, or 'country-born'.

9. If most people got drunk at dinner, supper was equally hilarious. At a party on November 3, 1775, at the Claverings all the ladies drank themselves silly on cherry-brandy and pelted each other with bread pellets. This rough game became suddenly fashionable and Barwell was hailed as Bread-pellet Champion of Calcutta, since he could snuff out a candle at a distance of four yards with a pellet. The craze came to an equally sudden end when a Captain Morrison, losing his temper at receiving a pellet unexpectedly in the face, threw a leg of mutton at the offender. A duel followed in which the pellet-thrower was nearly killed; and the practice fell into disfavour. —Dennis Kincaid's *British Social Life in India*.

10. It would have seemed oddly unsocial for a gentleman to drink less when, as Mrs Fay wrote, "every lady (even your humble servant) drinks at least a bottle." —*British Social Life in India*.

11. We usually come across lamentations in the papers of much longer time being taken in the voyage round the cape. "Seven months and-a-half have now elapsed since the date of the latest advice from Europe!" is the exclamation of the editor of the Calcutta Gazette, in his paper of the 4th May, 1809; and we find the announcement of the arrival of a Dutch East Indiaman named *The Stuart* on the 24th March, 1789, which had been fourteen months on her voyage from Amsterdam to Bengal. —*Honorable John Company*.



## CHAPTER 3

# Akbar's Queen Mary

H.S. HOSTON<sup>1</sup>

Mirza Zu-l Qarnain had been brought up in Akbar's Court with the future Shah Jahan. They had been playmates, and Shah Jahan had to allow the Mirza many things which he would have suffered from no one else. Fr. Francisco Corsi, S. J., in a letter from Dinduana to the Assistant of Portugal in Rome says of him (Oct. 15, 1626) : 'He is a young man (*man-cebo*). He is a great lord. He is very rich. His feelings (*spirinos*) are High and great, and from a child he was brought up in them. He has his special character and condition, and, what I value most, he is forced to live in the midst of an evil nation, and to be day and night with Moors and Gentios [Gentiles], and with them and through them to manage all his affairs, which are many and very important. The King [Jahangir] loves him, as brought up in the Royal House at King Akbar's order by one of the queens, who he called mother, and King Akbar he called father.'" (*MS. in my possession.*)

This passage does not prove that Akbar was the Mirza's father, but it may go some way, though not far, to prove that one of Akbar's queens was a Christian. I know that in saying so I expose myself to hear repeated some of the unpleasant things which irresponsible persons said in the *Statesman* after Nov. 14, 1916, when I started a discussion on Akbar's Christian wife. One of these unpleasant things was that, if Akbar had a European wife, there was little reason for Christians to



boast of it, since after all she would have been only his concubine. Who says that, if we moot this discussion, it is with a view of boasting that Akbar had a Christian wife, or that, if we do not succeed in proving her existence, we invented her for the sake of boasting? We find that for nearly a hundred years, if not more, this discussion turns up periodically. We did not start it. We are interested in it, as men must be in the matters of this sort and will continue to be, so long as clear proofs are not at hand one way or the other.

A childless queen in Akbar's harem adopted and educated till the age of twelve Mirza Zu-l Qarnain and his brother Mirza Skanderus, the sons of Mirza Sikandar, an 'Armenian' of Aleppo, and of Juliana, daughter of Khawaja Abdul-Hayy, other 'Armenian' in 'Akbar's service. Who was this childless queen?

In 1605, Mirza Zu-l Qarnain was 14 years old, and Mirza Skanderus was 11. (Cf. *MASB.*, V. 118.) The former was therefore born in 1591, and the latter in 1594. Akbar himself as a favour had given the name of Mirza Zu-l Qarnain to Sikandar's first son. (*Ibid.*, p. 132.) In 1598, Akbar insisted that Sikandar should marry the sister of Bibi Juliana, then dead. Sikandar did so, in spite of the opposition of the Jesuit Fathers at Lahore. Why did Akbar interfere in this matter and give trouble to the Fathers about it? Was it simply because he had had a special affection for Bibi Juliana, or because there was in the harem a lady, perhaps a relative of Juliana, who was interested in the matter?

At the end of 1596, the little Mirza Zu-l Qarnain began to come to school at the house of the Fathers in the Lahore Fort. On this occasion Fr. Jerome Xavier, S.J., writes (Lahore, Sept. 8, 1596) : "This King [Akbar] treats him like his son, and there are not wanting who say that he is (but this is known to God) ; at any rate, he does not deal more familiarly with his grandson [Khurram, later Shah Jahan], the son of the Prince" [Salim; later Jahangir].

The suspicion of some was therefore that Zu-l Qarnain was the illegitimate son of Akbar by Bibi Juliana, who moved freely in and out of the women's quarters in the Lahore Palace. Out of his special affection for Bibi Juliana Akbar had given her two sons to be adopted by the childless queen (*MASB.*, V. 132.)



We do not read that Bibi Juliana was a lady doctor attached to the women's quarters. She may have been, for not a few Armenians, Syrians or Chaldeans were reputed as excellent doctors in those days. We suspect that Juliana had a sister or relatives in the harem. The Jesuits never say so, as far as their letters are known to me. This of course is a formidable objection. Could Sikandar and Juliana and Khwaja Abdul-Hayy and other members of the family have kept this secret from the Jesuits ? Some simple questions ought to have wrenched the secret from the children, Mirza Zu-l Qarnain and Mirza Sikandar, both of whom must have frequented the school of the Fathers. No doubt, the Fathers would have had no access whatever, under ordinary circumstances, to the women's quarters. At Lahore, they lived however so near to the palace that they could not sleep on their terrace, which when Akbar heard the Fathers complain of, he gave them the use for the nights of his pleasure-boat on the Ravi. When the supposed European wife at some later date happened to die, how is it that we do not hear they were called in to assist her or bury her. This would have been an occasion for the secret to leak out in their letters. All the same, all through, we get no inkling.

Yet some will have it that Akbar had a Queen, a European lady, named Mary, the sister of Juliana. All depends on who was the childless queen who adopted Juliana's two boys. Was it a sister or relative of Juliana's ? Or was it simply Akbar's first queen, Rukaiya Begam, daughter of Akbar's brother Hindal, who was a childless queen ? She died in 1626, aged 84. (V. A. Smith, *Akbar the Great Mogul*, 1917, p. 25n. 3.)

In 1596, there was with Akbar's queen (we are not told which) the greater part of the year a small girl, the daughter of the 'Armenian' Domingo (Dominic) Pires, and when the Fathers went along the river and returned with Akbar's permission under the windows of his wives, Akbar's daughter would call out to them from the window : "Eh, Padri! Padri! By the sign of the Holy Cross God deliver us." (MS. letter of Fr. Jerome Xavier Lahore, Sept. 8, 1596.) Who was this daughter of Akbar, who, the Fathers say, had apparently learnt this salutation from the little daughter of Domingo Pires ? She must have been rather young to act as she did. She could not therefore have been Khanam Sultan, born to Akbar on Nov. 21, 1596.



(V. A. Smith., *op. cit.*, p. 452.) Akbar had at least two other daughters : Shukrun-nissa, who like her elder sister Khanam Begam, was allowed to marry, and Aram Bano Begam, who died unmarried in the reign of Jahangir, (*Ibid.*, 102.) V. A. Smith does not note the date of Shukrun-nissa's birth. Aram Bano Begam was born on Dec. 22, 1584. (*Ibid.*, 456). In 1596 she would have been 12 years old. I take it she was the marriageable girl who in 1596 was present when Akbar, going to his pleasure-boat on the Lahore river, would call the Fathers and talk with them in his daughters' company, a breach of Moslem etiquette. (*MASB.*, V. 173) The little daughter of Domingo Pires must have been born to him from the Indian woman whom he married at Fatehpur Sikri on Sept. 24, 1582. On that occasion Akbar came to the Fathers' chapel. He even translated to the woman Blessed Rudolf Aquaviva's Persian sermon, and after the ceremony sat down with his children and two of his principal chiefs at a banquet *a la Portugaise* in the Fathers' house. (*Ibid.*) The salutation which Domingo Pires' little daughter taught Aram Bano Begam must have been in Hindostani.

Like her little daughter, the wife of Domingo Pires must have had access to the women's quarters in the Lahore palace. We are in the dark as to the reasons which brought her there. And so the evidence in favour of a European queen at Akbar's court remains thus far inconclusive.

There were in the harem ladies with Christian proclivities. How is this to be explained ? Beale only conjectures that the inscription on a tomb at Sikandra refers to Akbar's childless queen, Rakiya Begam. It says : "I witness that Mahommed is the messenger of God.....that the unity of God is true that the Old and New Testaments are true, that the Psalms of David are true." (Quoted from Mr. Scallan.) This inscription is an echo of the discussions which agitated the men's quarters at Fatehpur Sikri in 1580-1583. One day in a discussion with Akbar's doctors, the Jesuits were told that the Torah is the book of the Jew, the Gospel that of the Christians, the Quran that of the Muhammadans, and the Zabur, or the Psalms of David, that of the Georgians. These doctors thought the Georgians were not Christians, to which the Jesuits replied that all Christians, the Georgians too, accepted the Old and the New Testament and the Psalms of David. (*MASB.*, III. 609). The



inscription on a tomb at Sikandra is a strange one, whether the utterance be that of a Muhammadan or a Christian lady. If the tomb is that of Rakiya Begam, from whom had she learned that not only the Old Testament and the Psalms of David, but the New Testament also, were true. From the occasional visits of Sikandar's first wife Juliana, from his second wife, from Domingo Pires' wife and her daughter, or from a Christian lady living permanently in the harem? Her declaration may imply she had read all the books mentioned. She may. Fr. Jerome Xavier translated into Persian and Hindostani the greater part of the Gospels, perhaps all four, and other books, brought from Persia by Vechiete about 1604, ancient translations, some of them several hundred years old, contained parts of the Old and New Testaments. Copies of these would naturally find their way into Akbar's or Jahangir's Library. She may also have obtained copies from some of the Christians at the Court, through their wives. Where is this inscription found? In what part of Sikandra? Does it bear the date 1626, when Rakiya Begam died? If not, might it not indicate the tomb of a Christian lady?

There exists a stubborn tradition at Agra that the mausoleum opposite Akbar's, at Sikandra, *i.e.*, on the left as one goes from Agra to Fatehpur Sikri, is the tomb of Akbar's Christian wife. It was for a long time part of the Church Missionary Society's Orphanage, Sikandra. It was cleared by the Archaeological Department in 1912 and restored. Rousselet in his *Indian and its Native Princes*, 1878; writes: "Near Akbar's Mausoleum, beyond the enclosure, stands a ruined cenotaph, containing the tomb of Akbar's European wife, the Begum Marie". Rousselet travelled in India in 1864-65. The Rev. Henry Lewis writes in his *History of Sikandra*, "The spot [for the Sikandra Orphanage] fixed upon was remarkably appropriate. For upon it, and forming a conspicuous feature in the country around, was standing in solitary splendour the massive tomb of Queen Mariyam, the Christian wife of that enlightened, though capricious, Mahometan monarch Akbar. . . . . Nothing is known of the woman selected for this honour, except that her name was Mariyam-uz-Zamani, and that she was a Christian. She probably owes much of her subsequent fame to the fact that she afterwards became the mother of the Emperor Jehangir." (Cf. for Rousselet and Lewis, F. Fanthome's *Reminiscences of*



*Agra*, Calcutta, 1894, p. 10). When was the Sikandra Orphanage founded? From its beginning it succeeded to a tradition still vivid at Agra. Did the tradition also state that her name was Mariyam Zamani, and that she was the mother of Jahangir, or did the Rev. H. Lewis add this own? Did he at least add of his own that the Mariyam Zamani buried there was Jahangir's mother?

Supposing that Akbar had a Christian wife, called Mariyam, it would not follow that she was Mariyam Zamani, or that she was the Mariyam Zamani who is said to have been Jahangir's mother. I need not speak of Mariyam Makani, for she was Akbar's mother. Of Jahangir's mother it is said that she was the daughter of Raja Bihar Mall, chief of Amber or Jaipur in Rajputana. (V.A. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-58.) V.A. Smith holds that Jahangir's mother, Mariyam Zamani, whose title was a posthumous one, is buried in the mausoleum situated near Akbar's tomb at Sikandra. That is the very place described by Rousselet and Lewis. If Smith is right in saying that Jahangir's mother was the daughter of Bihar Mall and that she is buried at the place shown by him, the tradition about the Christian wife buried in that mausoleum is evidently wrong. But, let me ask: Does the tradition at Agra state that Mariyam Zamani is buried in that Mausoleum? Does it add that she was the Christian wife? Does it add moreover that she was Jahangir's mother?

I visited that mausoleum in December 1912, when it had just been cleared. I do not remember there was any inscription at the cenotaph or in any other part of the Mausoleum. I was surprised to find none at the cenotaph.

Jahangir's mother died at Agra in 1623, says the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, 1908, XXII. 363; it adds that she is buried in the palace of Sikandar Lodi built in 1495, which in 1908 formed part of the Sikandra C.M.S. Orphanage. We should like to have clear evidence that the person buried there is Jahangir's mother, that her name was Mariyam Zamani and that she was the daughter of Bihar Mall. Would a Rajput princess not have been burnt? Mariyam Zamani may be considered a strange title to give even posthumously to a Rajput princess. If the title was posthumous, by what name was she known till 1623, only 4 years before Jahangir's death? Was she



not called Mariyam during her life, the title Zamani being added after her death? In that case do we expect a Rajput princess to have been called Mariyam during her life? How would her Rajput father have viewed such a name? I write away from most books to be consulted in this matter, and without the notes I accumulated in 1916. I think there are passages in Price's *Memoirs of the Emperor Jahangir*, from which it might appear that Jahangir's mother was called Mariyam and that she was not Bihar Mall's daughter. Let the book be carefully examined by those who have the opportunity. I know it will be said that the work published by Price is not the genuine *Memoirs*, and that the genuine *Memoirs*, are those translated by Mr. H. Beveridge. But, I have never believed greatly that Jahangir wrote his own memoirs. He had plenty of court chroniclers to do that for him, and the fact that two authors have tried to give us Jahangir's autobiography, might show that neither work is an autobiography, but is cast in the form of an autobiography. If then the *Memoirs*, edited by Price were to contain details contradicted by the *Memoirs*, published by Beveridge, we should not at once prefer the latter, because someone has said the former is spurious.

The name *Mariyam ki kothi* given to a small pretty building at Fatehpur Sikri is no authority by itself to assign to Akbar a Christian wife. I believe the guides who conducted me round the place said it was the house of Mariyam buried at Sikandra, and that she was the daughter of a Rajput Raja. But there is no knowing how much these men, said to be hereditary cicerones of the place, have learned from tradition, pure and unalloyed, and how much they learn from intelligent travellers. They may learn up the theories fashionable in books. Father H. Heras, S.J., of St. Xavier's College, Bombay, thinks it is the third house occupied at Fatehpur Sikri by the first Jesuit Mission (1580-83). Cf. his several publications on this matter: (1) *The story of Akbar's Christian Wife*, in *Journal of Indian History*, Allahabad University, Vol. 3, Pt. 2, 1924, pp. 218-235; (2) *A Catholic Chapel in the Court of Akbar*, in *St. Xavier's College Magazine*, Bombay, Sept. 1923, pp. 66-72 (illustrated); (3) *Akbar's Palace in Fatehpur Sikri*, in *The Examiner*, Bombay (Medows Street, Fort, Bombay), May 19, 1923; (4) another article, *ibid.*, July 28, 1923. I have spoken in the same sense as Fr. Heras in



the *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (1, Park Street), Vol. III, No. 9 (1914), p. 531. Judging however from the proximity of *Mariyam ki kothi* to what is called Jodha Bai's palace, the palace of one of the Queens (?), one might doubt whether *Mariyam ki kothi* was the house of the Fathers. I refer (*ibid.*) to another building with a gable roof of which Fr. Felix, O.C., now at the Catholic cathedral, Lahore, showed me once a photograph. He thought it was a Christian Church. I have however no clear notion as to how far it is situated from *Mariyam ki kothi*. I over-looked it in 1913, on my visit to Fatehpur Sikri. Two paintings supposed to represent the Annunciation and the Fall of Adam and Eve, both in *Mariyam ki kothi*, are likely enough good indications that the room in which the paintings are was the Father's domestic chapel (1580-83); but would not the building have been called 'the Fathers' House' during their stay there? Why should it have been called *Mariyam ki kothi* after they were gone? Was it called so because it contained a picture of the Annunciation, or because the last occupant was a Mariyam, either the supposed Christian wife, or Mariyam Makani, Akbar's mother, who died in 1604 at Agra, or Mariyam Zamani, Jahangir's mother, whom I here suppose to be distinct from Akbar's Christian wife? Akbar did not leave Fatehpur Sikri for Lahore till 1586, three years after the Fathers had gone back to Goa. During the next 13 years, he did not return to it. The place was not altogether abandoned after 1586. Prince Salim (Jahangir) was occasionally there after 1586, for instance in 1604. Cf. V.A. Smith, *op. cit.*, 311; 314-315. The last occupant, if a Mary, may have had pictures made representing our Lady or symbolical of her.

As regards two pictures of Akbar and his Anglo-European wife which I published in the *Statesman* on Nov. 14, 1916, they are as little authenticated as a certain Hindostani book, printed without name of author, printer, place and year, against all Government regulations. That book gives the lives of Akbar's wives, and among them that of Mariyam, Akbar's Christian wife. The chapter on Mariyam is taken from a small work by Talboys Wheeler, a sort of text-book of Indian history, in which the author imagines what her life must have been, if she existed. The Indian compiler has however inserted most incongruous details of his own invention. If some one were to get hold of



the book and to publish a translation of the chapter on Mariyam, side by side with the text in Talboys Wheeler, he would render a service.

There is a pretty common suspicion all over India that hardly any of the pictures of the Mughal Rajas and Begums offered nowadays for sale in India is authentic; yet, they are all signed by the greatest artists of some centuries ago. However many we may buy, there are always more. Shortly after publishing in *The Statesman*, 1916, two so-called authentic pictures of Akbar's Christian wife, and wondering that they were so much alike, as if they came from the same artist, I had a letter from a person in Calcutta, saying that he (or she) had a cameo of Akbar's Christian wife. Cameos too: Where had my correspondent bought it, and for how much? As Mr. Scallan well remarks, what chance had any artist to make the portrait of any of Akbar's queens?

To run a profitable trade in faked pictures is a very easy matter. I can imagine more or less how it is managed. X is a man of some means, who calls himself an antiquarian, a connoisseur in pictures, a collector of pictures. In fact he has always any number of pictures for show, and albums of sketches, which he alleges are all ancient and authentic. Ostensibly he is not a dealer in pictures; he has other means of income. All the same, behind the scenes he has at his service a number of present-day artists, whom he pays their pittance. I fancy he has his agents in different big towns, preferably gentlemen in impoverished conditions, connected or supposed to be connected with ancient Indian families, whom he pays a commission for the disposal of his products. If some one takes a fancy to one of the pictures of this agent but expresses doubts as to the authenticity or antiquity of the picture, he will be shown a corresponding small pencil-sketch on water-stained paper, though the water may not have affected the pencilling, and that pencil-sketch will bear the name of the same great court-painter of 300 years ago. Here and there will be read on various parts of the dress, in Urdu or Devnagri, such words as these: "brown, red, orange, blue." That means that the ancient artist who is said to have made that sketch was going to paint in brown, red, orange, blue, the corresponding parts of the big picture. And, indeed, these colours are on the corresponding big picture, and both sketch and big



picture have the signature of the same artist. Is not that convincing? You buy the picture, and you are cheated. Your only consolation is that you got the pencil-sketch in addition, and for nothing. You are not so simple. You call in the services of an expert, of say—the Principal of the School of Arts. He tells you: "Beware! The colouring materials are modern, the canvas is modern stuff." This you object to the agent of X. He agrees after some demurring; he lowers his price; he knows the name of the artist now; he is Z., a direct descendant of the artist whose name is on the picture. The picture has some artistic merit; you buy it and are prepared to pay a fair sum for the sake of Z.'s direct descendance from the artist, whose works Z. keeps copying. You are cheated still. Z. is no relation to the old artist.

I know of one who on a great occasion, when Rajas and Maharajas, and all the big wigs of our Europeans would come to an exhibition of Indian art, exhibited some 20 of his pictures, and some 10 of them had hanging up by the side unfinished corresponding pencil-sketches. The organisers of that Exhibition were no doubt taken in like common American globe-trotters. The trade thrives. The public is exploited in the name of art and history, and the police is helpless.

If I were to tell the story of Mir Jumlah and his European wife, I am pretty sure that in a year or two the picture market will be glutted with portraits and cameos of Mir Jumlah's Christian wife. I ought to keep the story to myself or publish it in some historical review, where the fakers are less likely to discover it. They will discover it all the same: for the managers of these shows are educated men. As the story has some connection with the tradition of Akbar's Christian wife, I ought to tell the story some day.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. In answer to Mr. F.C. Scallan's article on *Akbar's Queen Mary*, in the *Statesman*, dak edition, July 15, 1927, pp. 6 and 13, I shall refer Mr. Scallan to my study on *Mirza Zu-l Qarnain, A Christian Grandee of three Great Moghuls, with notes on Akbar's European wife and the Indian Bourbons*, in *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society*, 1, Park Street, Vol. V, pp. 105-194. To what I wrote there in 1916, I shall add here what I published in the *Catholic Herald*, 3, Portuguese Church Street, Calcutta, Nov. 19, 1924, p. 738, in an article entitled: *Father Mathew Ricci, S.J., of Peking*.



## CHAPTER 4

# 'Semi-Oriental European Women'

## A. Anglo-Indian Women of the Past

H.W.B. MORENO

One of the problems affecting the welfare of the Eurasian<sup>1</sup> community is the part which womanhood plays in its social uplift. In any community, nation or race—nay among individuals as well—it is woman and woman alone that can make or break. That, in the past, women in the community did play a prominent part is seen when the history of the community is studied from this view-point. Most people, for example, may know of Mrs. Carey, the Eurasian or Anglo-Indian wife of Peter Carey, and how she shared with the others the horrors of the Black Hole of Calcutta.

### 'Black Hole' victim

Dr. Busteed, in his *Echoes from Old Calcutta*, states that Mrs. Carey the country-born wife of Peter Carey, Mariner, was buried in the Murgihatta (Catholic Cathedral) Churchyard in 1801. To confirm this statement the entry of her burial has been traced. The following is from the *Calcutta Gazette* of April 2, 1801: "Deaths. On Saturday last (March 28) Mrs. Carey". In the Cathedral Burial Register the entry, which is in Portuguese, runs as follows: "28 March de 1801 Faliceo Maria Carry (*sic*) fey sep. noadro de Igreja com accompanhamto: de 1 Padre", which may be freely translated thus: "28 March 1801, died Mary Carey; was buried in the churchyard, with the accompani-



ment of one priest." This does not give her age at the time of her death. It was 60 years, for she was but 16 when she entered the Black Hole. There is no inscription over her grave.

It is known that Lady Wheeler, who perished at Cawnpore in 1857 with her husband and children, was of mixed descent. So recent a historian as Fr. Fitchett asserts that she was a Brahman. According to the *East Indian Chronologist* (Calcutta, 1801) Sir William James, Baronet, Chairman of the East India Company, who had been Commodore of the Bombay Marine was succeeded by his son, Richard, by his second wife, an Indian lady. Sir Richard "was the first Native of Hindustan who succeeded to the hereditary honours of England."

### Begum Johnson

It may be also observed that Mrs. Frances Johnson, the aged lady well-known in Calcutta a century ago as "Begum" Johnson, being the daughter of Governor Crook of Fort St. David, was not strictly speaking a "Native", although it is not altogether impossible that she may have been a Eurasian, just as Job Charnock's daughters were (of the wife that he had snatched from the funeral pyre). It may be remembered that the "Begum" was wedded to four Englishmen in succession, was the grand-mother of the second Earl of Liverpool, Prime Minister of England, and that her funeral in St. John's Churchyard in 1812 was attended by Lord Minto in his state-coach drawn by six horses.

### Begum Sumroo

The late Mr. G. W. Steevens, in alluding to the old days relates the well-known episode of Walter Reinhardt (General Sombre) and Zib-un-Nissa, better known as the Begum Sumroo. Reinhardt (1720-1778), a native of Treves, or of Salzburg, (or, as others say, of Strassburg) was a man of obscure origin, who deserting the French Army in Southern India, eventually, after numerous escapades entered the service of Mir Kassim, Nawab of Bengal, under the name of Somers. But his disposition and personal appearance gained for him the nickname of "Sombre," which again was corrupted by the Natives into "Sumroo".

It is he who is generally held responsible for the massacre at Patna in 1763. Ten years later he obtained from the Emperor



Shah Alam a large grant of land at Sardhana near Meerut. He had wedded in 1767, according to Mohamedan rites, the lady who became famous as the Begum Sumroo (1730-1836). This remarkable person, who possessed, beside good looks, great sagacity and force of character, has been variously described as a Cashmerian dancing girl, the daughter of a decoyed Arab nobleman, and a Syednani or lineal descendant of the Prophet. She had no children, but Sombre by his former wife Baha Begum, a Mohamedan woman who became insane, had a son, Nawab Zuffur Yab Khan. The son and his step-mother were both baptised at Agra in 1781 by Father Gregorie, a Carmelite monk, receiving respectively the names of Aloysius (Louis) Balthazar Reinhardt and Johanna, to which latter name she subsequently added that of Nobilis. Among other buildings she erected at Sardhana, at the cost of four lacs of rupees, a magnificent Cathedral dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. Succeeding on Sombre's death to his territory she ruled there in great state, maintained an army, and commanded it in the field. At Assaye, on the side of Scindhia, she opposed General Arthur Wellesley (afterwards the Duke of Wellington); and it is remarkable that her troops although repeatedly charged by the British cavalry, went off unbroken from the battle-field.

### Second marriage

She had taken into service George Thomas, the Irish Raja of Hansi (1756-1802), whose adventurous career is said to have suggested to Sir Walter Scott the character of Richard Middlemas in his story of "The Surgeon's daughter". She rewarded his services with the gift of Maria, a slave-girl, (or as others put it, one of her maids-of-honour) and a substantial dowry. For herself she chose as a second husband a Frenchman named Levasseau (or Le Vassoult), one of the 200 European Officers in her service. The nuptial knot was tied by the same Father Gregorie in 1793, but the match turned out to be so unpopular that a conspiracy was formed to set up Sombre's son in her place. The Begum and her husband sought refuge in flight, she in a palanquin and he on horseback. She was soon overtaken and surrounded by the rebels, and rather than fall into their hands, she stabbed herself in the chest. On the news reaching Levasseau, he drew a loaded pistol (her gift) from the holster,



and, putting its muzzle into his mouth, blew out his brains. This was in accordance with a compact that if either of them were killed the other would commit suicide. Her wound proved, however, to be superficial, which does not quite justify another account of the story that it was merely a ruse on her part to get rid of a husband of whom she had grown tired. She was seized, hurried back to Sardhana and kept chained to a gun. From this undignified position she was rescued after several days through the exertions of M. Saleur, a Colonel in her employ, but her power passed temporarily into her step-son's hands, until it was restored some months later to her old Commander, George Thomas.

Sombre's son died a prisoner at Delhi in 1803. He had been married to Julia Anne, known locally a "Bahu Begum," the daughter of Capt. L.A. LeFeuvre and Ann, his wife. By her he had a daughter named after her mother, but known as "Begum Saheba." She married, in November 1806, a Eurasian (not "a dour Scotchman," as H.G. Keene styles him) named Dyce, who had been a ward of the Kidderpore Military Orphanage and afterwards became a Colonel in the Begum's service. In the marriage announcement the contracting parties are described as "George Alexander David Dyce, Esquire, late Volunteer in Lord Lake's Army," and "the Honourable Miss Renard, granddaughter of Her Highness the Begum Sumroo." Colonel Dyce, who died at Calcutta in 1838, is buried in the North Park Street Cemetery, and his only son was the famous David Ochterlony Dyce-Sombre M.P. (1808-1831), whom the Pope created a Chevalier of the Order of Christ, presenting him at the same time with a splinter of the true cross. By the Begum her step-great-grandson, Dyce-Sombre, was adopted and appointed her heir. His two sisters, Ann May and Georgiana, married respectively Captain J.R. Troup and Baron P. Solaroli afterwards Marquis of Briona. Dyce-Sombre's marriage in England with the Hon. Mary Anne Jervis, daughter of the second Viscount St. Vincent, 1840, led to a stupendous law-suit. He eventually eked out his days in a mad-house, while she played with his millions. She survived until 1893 and, as a widow, married Lord Forester in 1862, to whose family a goodly portion of the aforesaid millions has since passed.

The Begum Sumroo herself died in 1836, leaving munificent



legacies for charitable purposes to the Pope, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Bishop of Calcutta; her funeral sermon was preached by Cardinal Wiseman. Anecdotes about her having a slave-girl buried alive and being kissed by Lord Lake at a reception have been related by Bishop Heber and Colonel Skinner respectively.

It is interesting to note that the ladies who influenced the lives of Sterne and Landor were connected with India. To the names of Eliza Draper and Rose Aylmer has been added that of Kitty Kirkpatrick, the original of "Blumine" in Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*. This circumstance has been established by articles in the *Nineteenth Century* (September, 1892) and the *Westminster Review* (July, 1894), while the story of her parent's marriage has been related by Sir Edward Strachey in *Blackwood's Magazine* for July, 1893. Recently the late Dr. T.O.D. Dunn contributed to the subject in the *Calcutta Review* for January 1919.

### Empress of France

It is not generally known that the ex-Empress Eugenie of France is descended from the Kirkpatricks of Closeburn. At the opening of the last century Lieut-Colonel (then Major) James Achilles Kirkpatrick, who has a fine memorial tablet in St. John's Church, Calcutta, was British Resident at Hyderabad. There he was known as *Hashmat Jang*. (Magnificent-in-battle), while the lady who became his wife was the Khair-un-Nissa or "Excellent-among-women". Claiming descent from the Prophet, she came of good Persian stock, and was the grand-daughter of the Buxay or Paymaster of the British Subsidiary Force. An old woman, playing the part of match maker, confided to Kirkpatrick that Khair-un-Nissa had fallen in love with him at first sight as she watched him through the purdah during some entertainment at her grand-father's house. On Kirkpatrick discouraging these advances, the girl eventually took the matter into her own hands and pleaded her own cause more successfully than her emissary had done. Everybody pretended to be shocked; and various charges levelled against the Resident, travelled up to the ears of Lord Wellesley at Calcutta, who demanded an explanation. On an inquiry being held, Khair-un-Nissa's mother confessed that it was her daughter who had taken the initiative



in the matter; and Kirkpatrick settled it by solemnising a marriage contract with the youthful Begum.

### Semi-oriental English woman

Of this union was born in 1802 Catherine Aurora (better known as "Kitty") Kirkpatrick. She was sent to England after her father's death, where she met Thomas Carlyle at Edward Irving's house. "A strangely complexioned young lady." Carlyle describes her, "with soft, brown eyes, Mrs. Strachey's full cousin. . . . amiable, graceful, low-voiced, languidly harmonious, half-Begum, in short, an interesting specimen of the semi-oriental Englishwoman." Later on he observes: "It strikes me, Mrs. Strachey would have liked to see dear Kitty and myself together and continue near her, both of us, through life." Kitty read the passages in Carlyle's *Reminiscences*, but the object of her hero-worship was widely different person, and upon him she bestowed her hand. This was Captain J.W. Phillips of the 7th Hussars, and Carlyle then characteristically refers to her becoming "the prize of some ex-Captain of Sepoys." With the soldier, however, she could scarcely have been less happy than with the Sage; she survived till 1889 in which year she died at Torquay, aged 87. It only remains to add that there is a pleasing portrait of her in *New Letters and Memorials* of Jane Welsh Carlyle (1903).

It is stated more than once in Sir R. Temple's *Journals* kept in Hyderabad, that after Kirkpatrick's marriage with Khair-un-Nissa Sir Henry Russell, the second Baronet and a subsequent Resident, "entered into a similar relationship with a relative of hers known as Lutf-un-Nissa."

### Eastern brunette

Contemporary with Kitty Kirkpatrick was a Miss Grant, who seems to have been a great favourite in English society. She is described by a writer in the *India Gazette* for December 20, 1830, as a "pretty looking country-born girl, by no means particularly fair and whose features slightly approximated to the Malayan." The same writer mentions that at a public assembly George IV (then Prince Regent) was reputed to be rather colour prejudiced, happening to cast his eyes on "the little Eastern brunette, had her immediately brought into his presence, and



learning her country, with his usual urbanity of manner saluted her and introduced her to his cortege as one of his Indian subjects."

### Most beautiful eyes

There is also the case of Colonel William Linnaeus Gardner (1770-1835) who was the nephew of Alan Gardner, the distinguished British Admiral who was created Baron Gardner. Coming out to India in the King's service he quitted it, after attaining the rank of Captain, to enlist under Holker's banner. Subsequently returning to his allegiance to the British, he raised in 1809, "Gardner's Horse, the cavalry corps later known as the 2nd Lancers." By Moslem rites he was united in wedlock with Nawab Mut Munzl-un-Nissa, Begum Delme, the daughter of the deposed Prince of Cambay. By Gardner himself the story of his wooing was related to Fanny Parkes, authoress of that charming book *Wanderings of a Pilgrim in Search of the Picturesque* (1850), and is so engagingly told that quotation becomes irresistible:—

"When a young man I was entrusted to negotiate a treaty with one of the Native Princes of Cambay. Durbars and consultations were continually held. During one of the former, at which I was present a curtain near me was gently pulled aside and I saw, as I thought, the most beautiful black eyes in the world. It was impossible to think of the treaty: those bright and piercing glances, those beautiful dark eyes completely bewildered me. I felt flattered that a creature so lovely as she of those deep black, loving eyes should venture to gaze upon me. To what danger might not the veiled beauty be exposed should the movement of the purdah be seen by any of those present at the durbar. On quitting the assembly I discovered that the bright eyed beauty was the daughter of the Prince. At the next durbar day my agitation and anxiety were extreme to behold again the bright eyes that haunted my dreams and my thoughts day by day. The curtain was again gently moved, and my fate was decided. I demanded the princess in marriage. Her relations were at first indignant and positively refused my proposal. However, on mature deliberation, the Ambassador was considered too influential a person to have a request denied and the hand of the young princess was promised. The prepara-



tions for marriage were carried forward. Remember, said I, it will be useless to attempt to deceive me I shall know those eyes again, nor will I marry any other! On the day of the marriage I raised the veil from the countenance of the bride; and in the mirror that was placed between us, in accordance with the Mahomedan ceremony, I beheld the bright eyes that had bewildered me. I smiled. The young Begum smiled too."

Only thirteen years old when she was married, the "young Begum" and her husband lived happily for forty years after, latterly on his *Jagir* at Khasgun (Etah district), the month after his death she followed him to the land where there is neither marrying (romantic or commonplace) nor being given in marriage. Both their sons, Alan and James Valentine, followed the paternal example, the younger selecting one of the fifty-two children of Mirza Sulaiman Sheko, son of the Emperor Shah Alam and brother of the Emperor Akbar Shah. Other members of the noble house of Gardner followed suit; and their family tree illustrates curiously enough, matrimonial connections between an English barony, the Emperors of Delhi, the Kings of Oudh, and the Nawabs of Cambay.

Regarding his own marriage Colonel Gardner wrote to an Indian newspaper in 1825, as follows: "A Moslem lady's marriage with a Christian by a Kazi is as legal in this country as if the ceremony had been performed by the Bishop of Calcutta, a point lately settled by my son's marriage with Nawab Mulka Hummanee Begum, the niece of the Emperor. The respectability of the females of my family amongst the natives of Hindustan has been settled by the Emperor many years ago, having adopted my wife as his daughter: a ceremony satisfactorily repeated by the Queen on a visit to my own house at Delhi."

Both Colonel Gardner's wife and her sister, Khanun Zahoor-ul-Nissa, had been adopted as his daughters by the Emperor Akbar Shah. The latter princess married Major Hyder Young Hearsey (1787-1840), who apart from his military exploits (in company with Moorcroft), was the first to explore Western Tibet. She outlived her husband ten years, managing his estate at Kareli, near Budaon, where she lies buried in a garden. Near her father's house (now in ruins) at Phuligunge, Agra (opposite the gate of the Taj) she had a well dug which is



marked by a tablet. Hyder Hearsey's daughter married her kinsman General Sir J.B. Hearsey, K.C.B., who in gratitude for his services during the Mutiny, has been styled. "The Saviour of Calcutta." The history of this distinguished Eurasian family has been written by General Hugh Pearse, D.S.O.

### Noble Afghan lady

Let us turn to an officer known in our own day: Colonel Sir Robert Warburton, K.C.I.E. (1842-1899) the Warden of the Khyber, was the son of Colonel R. Warburton, R.A., who married in November 1840, a noble Afghan lady, a niece of Amir Dost Mohamed. The witnesses to the nuptial ceremony were Colonels Stuart and Jenkins and the ill-fated Sir Alexander Burnes. The certificate of his parents' marriage was preserved by Sir Robert and is described by him as a curious document. To the same family belongs Mr. J.P. Warburton, late of the Punjab Police, who is believed to be the original of Strickland in Kipling's *Plain Tales from the Hills*.

Reviewing the past history of the Anglo-Indian Community, it cannot be denied that Anglo-Indian women did take a very prominent part in its progress and welfare.

## B. Michael Madhu Sudhan Dutt and his Indo-European Wives

It is not an easy task to unravel, at this distance of time, the details concerning the two marriages contracted with Indo-European ladies by Michael Madhu Sudhan Dutt, the great Bengali epic poet and author of the famous "Meghnadabada."<sup>2</sup> The first of these wives, Rebecca Mactavish, was the daughter of an indigo planter in the Madras Presidency. She was of Scottish parentage, but resident in India. Her grandfather was Dugald Mactavish, an agent of the firm of Arbuthnot and Company, the once famous South Indian mercantile house, which owned indigo concerns at Cuddapah. The poet married this lady against the wishes of her parents, most probably in the year 1848, when he was usher in the Madras Male Asylum for the children of Europeans and their descendants.



In a letter to one of his friends, written from Madras, dated March 19, 1849, Dutt writes in affectionate terms of the partner he had chosen: "Talking of my good lady puts me in mind of the introduction of the 'Captive'." This was one of the English poems which he addressed to her. He gives a specimen:—

Oh! beautiful as Inspiration, when  
 She fills the poet's breast, her faery shrine,  
 Waved by melodious worship! Welcome then  
 Though ours the home of want—I ne'er repine—  
 Art thou not there—e'en thou—a precious gem and mine?  
 Life hath its dreams to beautify its scene;  
 And sunlight for its desert; but there be  
 None softer in its store—of brighter sheen—  
 Than love—than gentle love—and thou to me  
 Art that sweet dream, mine own in glad reality!

Rebecca had two sons and two daughters, of whom one son and one daughter survived her. Little is known of the daughter. The son, Mactavish Dutt, practised for some time as a pleader in the Court of Small Causes at Madras. For seven years the poet lived with his wife, but prior to the year 1855 differences arose; a separation followed and divorce proceedings were taken against her in 1855. Rebecca died in Madras in July 1892.

Mr. G. Parameswaram Pillai, writing on the marriage connections of the poet, states: "While in Madras he married the daughter of a European Indigo Planter, but the marriage was by no means happy: within a few years he obtained a divorce from his wife and married another European lady. She was not only faithful to him, but was a partner in his joys and sorrows to the last."

Supremely interesting is the life of the poet's second Indo-European wife, Emilia Henrietta Sophia<sup>3</sup>, whom he married in Madras shortly after securing his divorce. This lady was of French extraction: and her father, at the time of her marriage, was a professor at the Madras Presidency College. The domestic life of the poet was made happy by the solace and comfort she brought him. She shared willingly her husband's sorrows and was a staunch associate of all his penury and distress. Gour Das Bysack writing of her says: "He (the poet) was as happy



in her company as possible in this world and she was as faithful as Savitri herself." She was a gifted woman, could read the "Meghnadabada" in Bengali and was an adept at the piano.

The poet left for Europe on June 9, 1862, his wife following him and reaching England on May 2, 1863. Shortly after her arrival the poet with his family went to Paris where they underwent great privations and would have starved if it had not been for the generous assistance given by Pundit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. In 1865 Dutt returned to England to study for the Bar, and met the late Mr. W.C. Bonnerjee, who was himself eating his dinners at the time. Dutt was duly called and arrived in Calcutta in February 1867, but he had suffered great distress while in England. Writing from 14, Wood Lane, Shepherd's Bush, London W. on June 18, 1866 to his friend Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar he pours out the story of his troubles in these pathetic paragraphs:—

You cannot imagine what sleepless nights my poor wife and myself have passed, talking over our affairs and prospects, and we have come to the conclusion that it would be better that I should go out alone and that she should follow me some months after when I have acquired a sort of professional footing.

I do not know if you have already forwarded (as I hope you have) the £200. If you have then you must induce our kind friend (?) to give you £300 more and that money you must send me so that it might reach me by the first or at the latest by the second incoming mail of September, for then I shall be in a position to give up this house and seek obscurer and cheaper lodgings somewhere else. The £300 will pay my call expenses and keep us here till I leave so that we shan't trouble you for more money for our living. Then, it will cost me £200 to go out, and I must leave for my wife at least £200 in the Bank—alas! who will give me this money? If you were rich I should not be so miserable, for I know the nobility of your heart. Do you think a letter from me to Jotindra Tagore will have any favourable effect? And then, when I get back to Calcutta, I must



look to my own exertions. Why should I fear to fail?

I hope you will send me £200 in September, for I must get out of this house and the last quarter of the year ends with that month. The proprietors are hard-hearted people and if I am unable to pay and move out, they no doubt, will apply the hard enactments of the English law of Landlord and Tenant to my case, for I am a yearly tenant, and if I remain one day after the expiration of the term, they might compel me to keep the house and the house another year, at a higher rate of rent!

The £200 which I expend now every day will pay off last quarter's debts and leave something over to carry us on to next September, and then immediately after the receipt of your letter and the money, I shall apply to the Benchers of Gray's Inn for my Call.

Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee remained a close and intimate friend of the poet and his family while in England and it is recorded that almost every Sunday he dined with them in their house in London. As already mentioned the poet returned to India in 1867, and in May 1869 his wife with her children followed, having for a time, stayed in Paris before proceeding to India.

When Mr. Bonnerjee was on his way out to Calcutta *via* Marseilles in July or August 1868, he called on Mrs. Dutt in her Paris home. He found her in a state of acute penury as her husband had not been able to send her remittances regularly. Sympathising with her he offered her his whole purse, containing the modest sum of £10, to take out of it whatever she thought fit. She took £8 leaving only £2 for the owner of the purse to meet his expenses from Paris to Marseilles and for the voyage from Marseilles to Calcutta.

Of the children of the poet by his second marriage, the eldest was a daughter, Henrietta Elizabeth Sharmista. The name "Sharmista" was taken from the well-known drama of the poet called by that name. She was born in the year 1859; and was twice married, firstly, to W. W. Floyd, and on his death to W. B. Nyss. By the latter she had one son, William Brightman Samuel Nyss, who for a time was Superintendent of Excise and Salt in Darjeeling. She died at the age of twenty on February



15, 1879. It is recorded that when the poet died in great want in a hospital in Calcutta, (for he was improvident and failed to succeed at the Bar) Sharmista went to Mr. Bonnerjee to beg of him to pay for the funeral expenses. So anxious was she to get the money that it is said she approached the eminent barrister while he was in the midst of a case and actually addressing the Court.

The next child was a son, Frederick Michael Dutt, who was born on July 23, 1861. He showed great promise as an artist but died at the early age of 13 years and 10 months on June 11, 1875.

The youngest son, Albert Napoleon Dutt, was educated at St. Xavier's College, Calcutta, as a boarder. The writer well remembers his slim erect figure and his gentle manly manner while continuing his studies in the College. He rose to be Assistant Sub-Deputy Opium Agent at Lucknow, but died at the age of forty on August 22, 1909. A few of his children survive.

Emilia Henrietta was very devoted to her husband but "she was quite powerless to restrain him from extravagance or check him in his imprudence."

"Poor lady, what could she do? She forget everything as he stood by her side, as she looked up to his face, the face of the idol of her heart, the idol she adored and worshipped with all the foundness of womanhood." Silently undergoing all suffering with her husband she passed away on June 26, 1873, just seventy hours before the death of the poet himself.

The Burial Register of the Lower Circular Road cemetery at Calcutta contains the following entry:—

"26th June 1873. Emelia Henrietta Sophia Dutt, aged 27 years, wife of Michael: burried by J. Lewis and Co., in a *kutch*a grave 23 feet south of Mrs. L. J. MacCarthy's headstone, 5th range of graves, 6th walk south from the 1st gate, south-east quarter. C.R.B.G."

According to the Burial Register she must have been born in the year 1846. If this be correct she must have been married at the age of nine when the poet himself was thirty-one years of age, and her eldest child must have been born when she was thirteen. The age mentioned in the Register must therefore be



an error, for it would be absurd to imagine a lady of French extraction marrying at so tender an age. In all probability she was born in the year 1836 and was married to the poet at the age of nineteen dying at the age of thirty-seven. Her grave lies close to the grave of the husband to whom she clung so closely in life.

Strangely enough, beyond a cement plastering over the grave no suitable monument stands to the memory of this devoted Indo-French lady, the loving and faithful wife of the greatest epic poet of Bengal. A great deal has been said about the practice of European or Anglo-Indian ladies marrying Indians, chiefly Bengali gentlemen. Michael Madhu Sudhan Dutt was the first to introduce the custom.

## C. Mrs. Job Charnock The Real Founder of Calcutta

AFM ABDUL ALI

Job Charnock, who founded the city of Calcutta at the behest of his Hindu wife Rani about 300 years ago, was the son of a London Solicitor. He came out to Bengal about the year 1655-56 to try his luck in India for it was not until January, 1657, when his name first appeared in the registers of the East India Company, as a junior member of the Council. Having worked his way up in the service of the Company, he was appointed in 1663 Chief of the Company's factories in Hooghly.

### Romantic alliance

It was in this year at Patna that he met the beautiful young Hindu girl of 15 summers, who was to become his wife and the mother of his children. There is nothing on record to prove that he married her under either Christian or Hindu rites, but it may safely be presumed that he merely formed a romantic alliance with her as was the practice in those romantic times.

During the year 1679, the Court of Directors, appreciating his valuable services, appointed him Chief at Kasimbazar and Second on the Council, with the right of succession to the office



of Chief of the Bay of Bengal. Charnock, however, did not take up his new duties until the following year, when with his wife and two daughters, Mary and Elizabeth, he arrived at Kasimbazar. It was at Kasimbazar in 1682 that his third daughter Catherine was born. Things at Kasimbazar were not going on too smoothly. There were constant troubles with the Nawab Shaista Khan and eventually on the outbreak of hostilities Charnock was obliged to return to Hooghly in 1686 as Agent. In the meantime he had succeeded John Beard (Senior) as "Governor of the Bay of Bengal."

The forces of the Nawab followed Charnock to Hooghly, hostilities continued, and finally on December 20, 1686, Charnock was compelled to withdraw with his Council and the entire effects of the Company and establish himself in the swampy village of Sutanuti<sup>4</sup>, the mother of the present city of Calcutta. In the village, a temple in the name of Kali (Durga) was great attraction for the religious minded Mrs. Charnock. Pursued by the overwhelming forces of the Nawab, Charnock was obliged to leave Sutanuti in February, 1687 for the malarious and swampy island of Hijili, situated on the western bank of the river Hooghly at its junction with the Rasulpura river. While at Hijili the representatives of the Nawab came to terms with the English and signed a treaty, which later events proved to be a fraudulent transaction.

Charnock at first proceeded higher up the river to Ulluberia, the "abode of owls", but finding the place unsuitable returned to Sutanuti for the second time on September 20, 1687. Hostilities, however, soon broke out, and early in 1688, Charnock with his family members and the remnants of his soldiers embarked on the frigate *Defence* and sailed for Madras. While at Madras, his three daughters were baptised at St. Mary's Church on August 19, 1689 by the Reverend John Evans, formerly Chaplain of the Bay at Calcutta.

### Returns to Bengal

It was sometime early in 1690 when the Nawab Ibrahim Khan, Viceroy of Bengal, influenced apparently by the Moghul Emperor, Aurangzeb, wrote to Charnock requesting him to return to Bengal and offering to fully compensate him for all the Company's goods that had been plundered or destroyed.



On receipt of this request, Charnock, with the consent and approval of the Council at Fort St. George, sailed for Bengal during July of the same year on board the *Princess*. Members of the family accompanied him.

He arrived on the deserted banks of the river Hooghly at Sutanuti, situated at a point near Nimtalla Ghat between Beniatolla and Sobha Bazar Ghat at midday on Sunday August 24, 1690, for the third and last time. On that memorable day, Charnock hoisted the Standard of England on the desolate banks of the river and finally laid the foundation of the future great city of Calcutta. Hereafter, Charnock remained at Sutanuti and carried on till the time of his death.

The village of Sutanuti derived its name from the number of cotton weavers who had settled here. It was at this time the most prosperous place for the promotion of the English trade in this part of the country.

Charnock and his family appear to have lived quite happily in their unostentatious home in the little fishing village, but there is no doubt that the conditions under which they existed must have been as extremely trying to them as to the other Europeans in Bengal.

### First English wedding

It would be of interest to know that the first English wedding that we know of was performed at Sutanuti where Charnock's eldest daughter, Mary, married Charles Eyre, who in 1694 was appointed Governor of the Bay having previously been created a Knight. It is very probable that Elizabeth and Catherine also married at Sutanuti, the former William Bowridge, a junior merchant and the latter Johnathan White. Charnock also had a son, who died in infancy.

It is said that Charnock used to sacrifice a cock on the grave of his wife every year on the anniversary of her death in conformity with the custom prevailing among low class Hindus in the province of Bihar, and observe other rituals prevalent in Bihar in those days.

Charnock had by now become an old grey-haired man weakened in body by constant attacks of fever, and exhausted by the climate and other discomforts he had endured during his earlier days.<sup>5</sup> In his old age, we are told, he fell a victim to



a severe attack of malaria, to which he succumbed and passed away peacefully on January 10, 1692 at the age of 62. He was buried that same night with the aid of lighted torches, as was the custom in the Settlement during that period. The mausoleum in which he rests with his wife, son and his daughters, Mary and Catherine, is still to be seen in the Churchyard of St. John's Church in Calcutta.

## D. General De Boigne's First Wife<sup>6</sup>

JADUNATH SARKAR

In December 1794 an exceptionally clever Bengal civilian named Thomas Twining was General De Boigne's guest at Aligarh for two days and a half. He writes, "When the things were removed (from the breakfast table), and he called for his first *chillum* he (*i. e.* De Boigne) said he must introduce his son to me, and giving some orders to his servants, they returned with a child about three or four years old, and placed him in a high chair by the side of his father. The general was not married, but he had, it appeared, his seraglio, in the eastern fashion, though not, it was to be hoped, so many wives in it as the Great Mogul. The little boy was dressed much as the child of a prince of the country would have been. . . . There was a slight tint, Cashmirean or Hindostanee, in his complexion ; and a delicacy in his features and form that led me to doubt whether he would ever attain his father's tall and vigorous stature." (Twining's *Travels in India a Hundred years Ago*, p. 277.)

Readers of the Comtesse De Boigne's voluminous *Memoires* will remember that the General's French wife (the young daughter of an *émigré* Marquis) hated her husband like poison, and did not visit him even once in his last illness. She calls him a cheat, who concealed his low relatives from her. This expression I take to refer to the oriental harem<sup>7</sup> that De Boigne kept in St. Leonard's Forest (Sussex). Sir Evan Cotton has traced the after life of De Boigne's Mussalman wife who lived there under the name of Mrs. Bennett (Benoit), ended her days in



acute distress on 4 January, 1854, and was buried in Horsham churchyard.

My copy of Victor de Saint-Genis's book, *Une Page Inédite de l'histoire des Indes: Le Général De Boigne*, (Poitiers, 1873), contains an inserted leaf on which a former owner has written: "La première femme du Général de Boigne était la fille d'un Colonel Persan appelée Helene Bennett—Begum—1788." If the year given here is correct, the General had two Mussalman wives.

The question now is, who was the mother of De Boigne's son? The unique Persian ms mentioned by me records under the date the 23rd April 1792, "De Boigne Feringi, who has been married to the foster-child (*dukhtar-i-khanda*) of the junior Begam of the late Najaf Quli Khan, has granted three villages in parganah Palwal as the said Begam's *Jaidad*." This information enables us to supply the lacunae and correct the editor's date of a despatch from the Maratha envoy at Delhi to the Court of Poona. (Parasnis's ed., Vol. ii, p. 26, also 77).

Combining all these and some other Persian sources, we learn that General De Boigne, on return from the Rajputana campaign, visited Delhi on the 30th January, 1792 and was presented to the Emperor, the blind old Shah Alam II., on the 4th February,—his first audience having taken place on the 7th August of the year before. On this second occasion he presented a *nazar* of eleven *mohars* to the Emperor and one *mohar* to each of the forty Shahzadas. In return, robes of honour were bestowed on him, on two other French officers in his train and on his Indian secretary. On the 12th of February, 1792, he was married to Moti Begam, popularly called Najaf Quli Khan's daughter. The Marathi letter describes her as a *kalavantin* or a female skilled in music and dancing. She was not a professional dancing girl, but most probably an orphan adopted in her childhood by Najaf Quli Khan's childless second wife and educated in these accomplishments in his harem for presentation to the Emperor or some great noble on his birthday. Such was precisely the origin of Udham Bai, officially known as Hazrat Qudsia Begam, who became the wife of Muhammad Shah and mother of Ahmad Shah Padishah.

The day after the marriage, the newly wedded couple left for Bahadurgarh, in the Baloch settlement west of Delhi, which



Mahadji Sindhia had ordered to be attacked. Najaf Quli Khan (who died in July or August 1791), was a leading Persian general of Delhi, and his masculine senior widow shut herself up in the fort of Kanund (now in Patiala territory, 28° 15 N., 76° 13 E.), with all his treasure, troops and servants. Sindhia, under the Emperor's orders, sent a force to capture the place. But the Begam called Ismail Beg Khan (the nephew and son-in-law of the late Muhammad Beg Hamdani) to her aid, admitted him into the fort and stood a long siege by Sindhia's general Gopal Rao Raghunath, with two regiments of De Boigne's troops under Colonel Perron. The Emperor issued repeated orders to Sindhia for punishing Ismail Beg as severely as he had done Ghulam Qadir (who had blinded Shah Alam),—saying that these two were traitors of the same dye. It was, therefore, necessary for Ismail Beg to find a protector with sufficient influence in Sindhia's darbar. So, before De Boigne's marriage, he was entreated by the junior widow of Najaf Quli Khan, "Maintain the honour of Mirza Ismail Beg. Through your mediation I shall make him vacate the fort of Kanund and yield it to the Marathas. But you must save him."

On the 16th April 1792, Ismail Beg slipped out of the fort with only 20 horsemen and sought asylum with Colonel Perron in the Maratha siege-camp. The warlike senior Begam had already been killed by a cannon-ball. Gopal Rao demanded his surrender, but Perron appealed to De Boigne, who arrived from Bahadurgarh on the fifth day, and induced the garrison to vacate the fort of Kanund after paying their arrears. When Perron introduced Ismail Beg, De Boigne told the latter, "Our people do not practise duplicity or deception. As you have come to this camp of your own motion without the consent of the Maratha sardars, I cannot do anything for you. Whatever Appa Khande Rao decides about you, cannot be objected to by me." Ismail Beg replied, "Well, let my fate come to pass. But this craven-heartedness on your part will be remembered for ever." He referred to the oriental belief that the protection of a refugee is a sacred duty.

De Boigne softened. He rose up, mounted Ismail Beg on his own elephant, and, surrounded by a full escort of his own troops, went to the Maratha general and introduced Ismail Beg to him. It was decided that the captive should be lodged in all



honour and comfort in Agra fort and his case referred to Maharajah Sindhia for his orders. [*Ibratnamah*, iii. 262.]

De Boigne gave up to the junior Begam of Najaf Quli all her husband's property found in Kanund and also settled three villages near Palwal on her for her support. When he next came to Agra, he visited Ismail Beg and granted him a monthly allowance of Rs. 600. He constantly protected Ismail Beg, as the Maratha envoy at Delhi complains in his despatches.

The General seems to have taken another Asiatic wife. We learn that "the widow of Mirza Raza of Pondri,—in the Jalesar subdivision of Agra,—shared the fortunes of General De Boigne, and became a Christian on his account." (Atkinson's *N. W. P. Gazetteer*, Vol. VII., App. p. 17). Was she the Indian lady who lived as "Mrs. Bennett" in Sussex, and is called Nur Begam by Abu Talib<sup>8</sup> who saw her in London?

## E.(i.) The Pioneer Englishman and his Indian Wife

HERBERT ALICK STARK

### Few English women in India

As has been said, in the earlier years of John Company there were exceedingly few English women in India. One can well imagine the monotony of life and the tedium of the day, at even a large settlement like Madras, where the one thing to look forward to was the weekly Sunday dinner for the "upper ten" at the President's table—

"There will we talk of bygone times,  
Send back our thoughts to western climes,  
And deem the distant home is near,  
And wish the absent loved ones here."

Mandelslo, the celebrated Italian traveller, describes how he was a guest at one of these banquets, and tells of the pathetic "hush" which fell after dinner when the President rose to propose to the oft-times home-sick exiles the never-omitted toast—"Our absent wives—God bless them!" After all, the men who first came out in the service of the East India Com-



pany were human, and drawn from the highest as well as the lowest grades of English society. It would be falsifying history to pretend that they were one and all superior moral beings. Sir Thomas Roe, who in 1615 came to the Court of the Emperor Jehangir as ambassador of King James the First, describes some of the characters to be found among the English pioneers—"A young gentleman about twenty years old, the brother of a Baron of England, being very unruly at home, and so many others that have been well born, when their friends knew not what to do with them, have been sent to East-India, that they might make their own grave in the sea, in their passage thither: or else have graves made for them in the Indian shores when they come there." A writer in the *Calcutta Review* (1845) says "They who came hither were often desperate adventurers, whom England, in the emphatic language of Scripture, had spued out; men who sought the golden shores of the East to repair their broken fortunes, to bury in oblivion a sullied name, or to wring with lawless hand, from the weak and unsuspecting, wealth which they had not the character or capacity to obtain by honest industry at home. They cheated; they gambled; they drank; they revelled in all kinds of debauchery." In *The English in India* (London, 1828) fuller details are given:—"His doings on these far-off shores were unknown to his countrymen in England; per-chance there may have been a parent, or a brother, or a friend, in whose eyes the adventurer might desire to wear a fair aspect: but in India he was as far beyond the observation of that parent, or brother, or friend, as though he dwelt on another planet. There were, in truth, no outward motives to preserve morality of conduct, or even decency of demeanour. From the moment of their landing upon the shores of India, the first settlers cast off all those bonds which had restrained them in their native villages; they regarded themselves as privileged beings—privileged to violate all the decencies of life . . . . Though associates in vicelinked together by a common bond of rapacity—they pursued one another with desperate malice, and, though few in number, there was among them no unity, except an unity in crime. Though of old, as at the present time, it was too much the fashion to send the more violent and intractable younger members of a family to some distant colony, there to place



them wholly beyond the reach of such chances of improvement as home-example ever presents, it would be unjust to say that all who came to these shores were the refuse of English respectability. . . . They left a country, of checks—checks imposed not only by civil polity but by the more stringent code of public opinion—to seek a country where no checks existed—what wonder then that they fell? . . . Where there is flesh and blood there must be disease—moral as well as physical.”

#### Clive and Hastings no moral men

The general stamp of man coming out to India hardly improved even up to the time of Clive and Warren Hastings. Clive gambled, and did worse. Says a writer in *The Calcutta Review*, “Hastings himself, whatever may have been his character as a political ruler, had no great title to our admiration as a moral man. He was living for years with the wife of another, . . . and when the convenient laws of a foreign land, deriving no sanction from Christianity, formally severed the bond which had long been practically disregarded, the Governor-General had the execrably bad taste to celebrate his marriage with the elegant adulteress with open display and festal rejoicing. What was to be expected from the body of Society, when the head was thus morally diseased?” This was during the reigns of George I and George II, and the pages of contemporary writers give us a graphic picture of the low ebb at which British morality ran in England itself after the high flood of Puritanic austerity in the days of the Commonwealth. There would seem to have been but little to choose between the Englishmen who came out to India in the service of the East India Company, and those who stayed at home to be enriched by its princely dividends. As Burke pithily put it, “There is nothing worse in the boys we send to India, than in the boys we are whipping at school, or whom we see trailing over a pike, or being over the desk at home.” Very few Anglo-Indian families of this period can now be alive; but, however that may be, it is clear the Anglo-Indian who lived in India and the Britisher who lived in England in the time of the First and Second Georges, were equally descended from the same moral or immoral stock. But the national life both in India and England was purified in the reign of George III through the



purging of British society while he was on the throne.

### **English women forbidden to come to India**

It has already been stated, that the Englishman coming out to India in the days of which we are dealing, was completely cut off from his homeland. Moreover, he had small prospect of returning to it. He was deprived of the companionship of the women of his race, for the regulations of the East India Company forbade English women sharing the risks and privations of their men. The exiles could hardly be expected to make no home for themselves in a foreign clime simply because their own women-folk and parish priests were not to be found in it. They accordingly solaced themselves by taking for their partners in life the women of the land; and they were in a position to make selective choice. Then too, not infrequently Indian women at nightfall visited the battle field to minister to the wounded and dying, and there were some who would not pass by a white man, because he was a white man. What more natural then that the British soldier or officer married the dusky village maid who had staunched his wound or moistened his parched lips?

### **Concubinage and contractual marriages**

While this is true, undoubtedly concubinage was practised especially in the earlier years of the Company's history. But both the temporary wife and her children by an Englishman in the humbler walks of life, were abandoned or left destitute on death, and merged into and became lost in the Indian population.<sup>9</sup> On the whole, the experience of the Portuguese seems to have taught the British the wholesome lesson that it was not safe to tamper with the homes of the people with whom they were trading. It would recoil on the prosperity of the Company's business, and might even jeopardise their lives were they to attempt to carry off Indian women wholesale as the Romans had once done the daughters of their Sabine neighbours. They, therefore, adopted the course of obtaining their wives by treaty with Indian acquaintances, or from the widows and females left on the battlefield—for it was customary, among the Muhammadans in particular, for a soldier's wife or slave-girl to accompany him on the march and be among the



camp-followers.<sup>10</sup> The women were generally baptised, and not infrequently the marriage was performed in accordance with the civic customs of the woman's caste.

### Influx of English women after 1833

Such marriages were by common consent considered entirely respectable, and they continued to be contracted, although with decreasing frequency, until the Renewal of the Company's Charter in 1833, when the former restrictions as to the residence in India except by servants of the Company were withdrawn, and when the opening of the overland route via the Suez Canal made voyaging to India less expensive and tedious; with the result that there was a great influx of Englishmen and women into the country. The British husband found it easier to teach his Indian wife the English language than himself to learn her vernacular; and so the English language, English customs, and English practices became the predominant tone of his home and children. When these were born, their births were notified, and they were christened. These mixed marriages so permeated English society in Calcutta, that in Daniel's pictures may be seen promenading the Esplanade an Englishman sharing his umbrella with his Indian spouse, or walking by the side of her palki—taking the air, or on their way to make a social call. Job Charnock, the Founder of Calcutta, married a Hindu widow whom he rescued from the funeral pyre of her deceased husband. Col. William Linnaeus Gardner, an ancestor of the Gardner family now in the British Peerage, and Hyder Young Hearsay, married two sisters, the grand-daughters of the Nawab of Cambay, and the adopted daughters of the Mughal Emperor. Gardner being of a chivalrous and ardent character, was naturally sensitive to comments on his marriage, and thus wrote in the *Mufasssil Ukhbar* of March, 1835: "I fear I must divest my marriage with Her Highness the Begum of great part of its romantic attraction, by confessing that the young Begum was only thirteen of age when I first applied for and received her mother's consent, and which probably saved both our lives. Allow me to assure you, on the very best authority, that a Moslem lady's marriage with a Christian by a Kazi is as legal in this country as if the ceremony had been performed by the Bishop of Calcutta, a point



lately settled by my son's marriage with the niece of the Emperor, the Nawab Mulka Humanee Begum. The respectability of the females of my family amongst the natives of the Hindustan has been settled by the Emperor many years ago, he having adopted my wife as his daughter, a ceremony satisfactorily repeated by the Queen on a visit to my own house in Delhi. My only daughter died in 1804, and my grand-daughters by the particular desire of their grand-mother are Christians. It was an act of her own, as, by the marriage agreement, the daughters were to be brought up in the religion of their mother, and the sons in that of your very obedient servant, William Linnaeus Gardner."

### Junior partners

The authorities of the East India Company were not slow to recognise and appreciate the advantages to the Company from the alliances formed by their servants with Indian women. The children grew up in attachment to, and in dependence upon, the nation of their fathers. Their mothers having been cast out by their Indian relatives, the children formed the beginnings of a new race standing in detachment from the people of the soil, and separated from them by speech, religion, dress, customs and habits—by those fundamentals which go to constitute nationality. Their interests were identified with the prospects of the East India Company, and their prosperity depended upon the permanency of its footing in the country. They were reared in an atmosphere of trade; and their knowledge of the prevailing vernaculars, and local conditions, of Indian customs and modes of thinking of natural products and manufacturers, of market places and facilities of transport, rendered them an invaluable asset to those whose chief concern was with the wealth to be derived from a lucrative trade. The fact of a home in India, reconciled the British soldier and factor to his lot in life, and weaned him from a natural desire to return to his native land. Contented servants, with interests vested in a land to which they had given hostages, were well worth encouraging. And so the Board of Directors decided upon stimulating the tendency of their humbler servants to make their permanent abode in India, by ruling an allowance of Rs. 5 a month for every child born to a soldier in



the ranks. By now the Company had factories or settlements at Surat, Masulipatam, Casimbazar, Pulicate, Armagaon, Pipli, Madras, Hughli, Patna, Bombay, Calcutta, and minor places.

### Anglo-Indian youngmen fill the vaccum

There were, however, other European nations seeking a harvest of riches in India. British rivalry with the Portuguese and Dutch threatened to spread to the French who had arrived in Cochin in 1667. Moreover, Sivaji, the Maratha Chieftain, was proving a thorn in the side of the Mughal Emperor, Aurangzeb. His followers had attacked and pillaged Surat, and had exacted *chaut* and *surdesh-mukhi* in the course of their many lightning forays and raids. In the Spanish Netherlands King William III was engaged in a war with the French. There had been heavy mortality among the soldiers sent out to India. It was imperative at the same time that British soldiers should be found to defend the British settlements in this country. Recourse therefore was had to the young men who were locally available—the sons of Britishers by Indian wives. These were bound by a common bond of interest to the Company in which their fathers served. They could find safety only by promoting its prosperity and consolidation. They stood to gain or lose with their fathers. It was their homes that they had to aid their fathers in protecting against bandits and outlaws, against invading armies and harassing Marathas. Those of them that had attained to manhood were of greater value than imported soldiers and writers. They cost nothing to bring out to India. They were acclimatised, and did not readily fall a prey to the inclemencies of an Indian sky. They were not under the necessity of learning the vernaculars, and they well understood the commercial morality and practices obtaining in the markets. They were familiar with the details of business, the class of goods in demand by Indians, and the time to buy and sell. Nor was this all. Their trading instincts had quickened and given an edge amid the sudden call to arms, the dashing onslaught, the desperate defence. Bred with Spartan contempt for luxury, inured by the vicissitudes that the Company's fortunes experienced, bound by ties of blood and speech and creed to all that was British in them, as they grew in years and



increased in numbers they elbowed out the Armenians as commercial agents and intermediaries in time of peace, and they reinforced the Company's forces, such as they were, in time of war. They thus permitted economies in expenditure which went to augment the dividends of shareholders in Leadenhall Street. They became the important wheels, the cranks, and pivots in the machinery of the Company's operations. The value set on them gained for them considerate and encouraging treatment. The first arrivals in the Company's service had laid the foundations of a trade which necessitated protection during its infancy, local labour during its expansion, and defence by arms during its consolidation. It received all three from its India-born sons. But for the presence in India of successive generations of those sprung from British fathers and Indian mothers, it may well be questioned whether in India England would ever have passed from the market place to the forum, from the factory to the council chamber, from merchandise to empire, from Company to Crown.

### Mixed marriages

As years rolled on the practice of marrying Indian wives fell into disrepute, for the necessity for it had disappeared. The new arrival could always wed a girl of mixed parentage, and it became customary for him to do so. When he had resort to a woman of the country he offended the community to which he belonged, and wronged British society in India by not providing a home to an Anglo-Indian female who was precluded from marrying an Indian husband. In revolt against his conduct his comrades practically ostracised him. Public opinion held that when the occasion for inter-marriage with Indians had disappeared, those who had recourse to it forfeited all claim to condonation of a wanton outrage on society. Unfortunately, it was not they who paid the penalty, so such as their hapless children. Nevertheless, there were still those who persisted in defying conventions by finding for themselves the conveniences of married life without marrying. And what was worse, these were generally the higher officials and more wealthy merchants and planters who moved in circles higher than the soldier class. These gentlemen by rank, were a law unto themselves. Averse to lowering their social status by



marrying an Indian or a girl of mixed blood, they were not above setting up a seraglio. On the other hand, there were also those who, having the instincts of the true Englishmen, had the moral courage to rise superior to popular prejudice, and they wedded women of respectable and even royal Indian families. Their sons were invariably sent to England for their education, and usually returned to India as Covenanted Servants or Commissioned Officers on the Company's Civil and military establishments. Their daughters commonly married gentlemen holding equal rank with their fathers, and retired to England with them. Two or three instances may be mentioned. Job Charnock, the founder of Calcutta, had three daughters by his Hindu wife, whom he snatched from the flames of her deceased husband's funeral pyre. Mary married Sir Eyre Coote, next successor but one to Job, and the founder of Fort William in the Presidency of Bengal. He built the Charnock Mausoleum, at Calcutta. Elizabeth married William Bowridge. She went to England in 1715, but was again in Calcutta within two years of the Black Hole. Mary and Elizabeth lie in St. John's Churchyard, Calcutta. Katherine married Jonathan White. Again, Colonel Kennedy married a princess of a Rajput State, and one of their daughters was the first wife of General Abraham Roberts, father of Lord Roberts, at one time Commander-in-Chief India. Their son, half brother of Lord Roberts, was in one of the Burma Services. Moreover, there have been instances in which the Governor-General and Lieutenant-Governors of Provinces have had Anglo-Indian relatives in the country.

### Fate of descendants

In dealing with the ultimate fate of the descendants of the Portuguese in India, it was observed that most of them have reverted to their original Indian stock. The descendants of the British in India have sorted out into three distinct groups. The first comprises those who were sent to England for their education and never returned to India, or who on retirement from service in India settled down in England. These have gradually been absorbed into the native population of England, and are no longer distinguishable from the Britisher. The second group continues in India as a distinct race. The third is being, or has been, absorbed into the Indian Christian population. In general



terms it may be said that the Anglo-Indians of the period lying between 1607 and 1775 have merged either into the British or Indian peoples. Those of the years following 1775 are divided perhaps equally into three sections—(1) those who have merged or are merging into the British nation; (2) those who have merged or are merging into the Indian nation; (3) and those who exist as the Anglo-Indian race of today. As a larger and larger number of Anglo-Indians settle down in Britain, or are being welded with the Indian populace through the economic pressure of these days, the expectation is that, in course of time, the true Anglo-Indian population of India will be exceedingly small.

## E.(ii.) The Eurasian Offsprings— A Problematic Issue

THOMAS EDWARDS

In January 1822, in consequence of a decision of the Supreme Court in Calcutta which declared that a large proportion of East Indians did not come under the denomination of British subjects, a subscription to defray the expenses of an appeal to the King (George IV) in Council was inaugurated. This was the commencement of the first combined movement of the East Indian community, which, after eight years of agitation and organisation, culminated in the Petition of the East Indians, Christian inhabitants of Calcutta and the Provinces comprised within the "Presidency of Fort William" to the Hon'ble the Commons of the "United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled," presented to the House of Lords by the Earl of Carlisle on the 29th March 1830, and to the House of the Commons, by the Honorable Williams Wynn, on the 4th of May of the same year.

### As fifers and drummers

Towards the close of eighteenth century, fears regarding the increasing numbers and loyalty of Eurasians were spread abroad chiefly amongst the servants of the Company; and, whether from a sense of danger, a feeling of shame and disgrace, or a deter-



mination to hedge round the preserves of office in the gift of the Directors from all but those of pure European birth and education, Eurasians were effectually excluded from positions and offices which they were well fitted to occupy. A general letter of the Court of Directors, 14th March 1786, prohibited those wards of the Upper Orphan School of the Bengal Military Society who were born of native mothers by British fathers from being sent to England for education. In the *Gazette* of June 1792, it was notified that no person, the son of a native shall henceforth be appointed to employment in the Civil, Military or Marine services of the Company, or as sworn officers of the Company's ships, between Europe and India. In 1795, during the Governor-Generalships of Lord Cornwallis, all persons not descended from European parents, on both sides, were prohibited from serving in the European branch of the army unless as fifiers, drummers and bandsmen. Those of their number, debarred from serving in British regiments, who entered the service of native princes, were immediately recalled on the outbreak of hostilities. This was the case in 1801, when the Maratha war began. Indeed, up to the renewal of the Charter in 1834, the general tendency of the rule of the Company was to level Eurasians to the same rank as natives, while at the same time, offices to which natives were eligible, such as those of Munsiffs and Sudder Ameen, were closed against Eurasians. Besides this, outside the Presidency towns, they were subject to the rule of Muhamedan law. English by parentage, the majority were denied the rights of British subjects, and in the Mufassal they had the benefit neither of *Habeas Corpus* nor trial by Jury. Christians by profession, they were subject to the rule of the Koran in criminal matters, English by birth, education and habits, they were in the eye of the law natives; nevertheless, when lavish grants were made for the education of natives, no provision was made for Eurasians; they were then considered not natives, and, loyal to the race of their fathers, many of them, with the feelings, tastes and habits of gentlemen, were debarred from entering the British army, or, indeed, serving India in any but the lower offices of the service.

### Position before 1791

Before the year 1791 the Company's services, civil and mili-



tary, were open to Eurasians; and members of the community before that date and for some time after, held positions, in the service which, on the whole, notwithstanding a few recent exceptions, they have never attained since. The soldier who commanded the Bombay army during the campaigns of 1803, 1804 and 1805 was General Jones, a Eurasian. Colonel Stevenson, another Eurasian, was Quartermaster-General of the army for many years. To these we may add the names of Colonel Nairne Major Deare, Captain Routledge, Lieutenant Mullins and Colonel Skinner of the Irregulars, all of them distinguished officers, notable for fearless bravery and gallantry in action, capable soldiers and leaders of men in the days when war was learned in the field and camp, and not as nowadays in a cramming establishment and in the bureau of a Military Department. There are yet in the civil service, and still more largely in the army, members of the Eurasian community who, through family connexions with the Directors of the late Company or other high officials, found an entrance to these services; but if the fact of their birth is not denied or ignored, it has been frequently suppressed.

#### Causes of downfall

The causes that worked together to produce this exclusion from the higher offices of the Indian service we have hinted at. We do not think that the Eurasians were entirely blameless. In all probability an amount of self-conceit, not always well-grounded in sterling capacity, was as apparent towards the close of last century, as it is to-day, among many individuals of Eurasians birth; and there may have been foolish talk and vapouring amongst the more restless and headstrong which gave some ground of truth for statements issued not with the authority of the Company's responsible officers, but nevertheless from the Government press, which damaged considerably the chances of Eurasians occupying any but subordinate posts, and represented them as a dangerous element in India to be suppressed and regarded with suspicion. Besides this, it seems to us, there can be little doubt that the influence of many Directors and other Indian officials was exerted to prevent the rise of Eurasians to higher offices, in order that European uncles and cousins might not meet in the various services of India, and



be continually associated on terms of equality with nephews and cousins born of native women and vice versa who, even if they were legitimate, and on this account, brought no stain on the family honour, had nevertheless in their veins some of the blood of the subject races; and might be ready to presume on their European ties, and be a standing dishonour and disgrace to the family escutcheon. Whether we have been successful or not in enumerating all the causes which produced the *Gazette* Notification of 1792, and the Resolution of Lord Cornwallis' time, 1795, Eurasians were effectually excluded by these orders: and notwithstanding the *Lex Loci* Act of 1831, the concessions granted to men of Indian birth at the renewal of the Charter, 1833 and 1855, and the various minutes and resolutions since these dates, it is certain that Eurasians have not, during his century, occupied the favourable position with regard to service in the great departments of State in India which they occupied before 1790. Nor is this all; before the Missionary and Government schools and colleges were established, it was only a comparatively small number of purely native men who possessed a sufficient acquaintance with English to render their services available as clerks and writers and in other posts in the various Government and mercantile offices. These positions were filled almost exclusively by Eurasians up to about 1835. Since then not only has the Eurasian community largely increased without any corresponding multiplication of offices in which their services are desirable; but the consequence of Missionary and Government education has been, that large numbers, yearly increasing, of pure natives have been competitors with Eurasians for those very posts which, up to the first quarter of this century, they, because of their English education, almost monopolised. While pure native races have been provided by Missionaries and the Government with schools, colleges and splendid staffs of teachers to carry on their education, Eurasians have had to depend almost entirely on their own resources aided, by private philanthropy. The consequence is that all the advantages and facilities are on the side of Hindus and Muhamedans, and so culpably negligent have successive Missionaries Church dignitaries and rulers of India been, that a large proportion of the lower section of Eurasians have sunk in the social scale and practically disappeared among native races.



### Petition of Grievances

In November 1825, a general meeting of East Indians was held at the house of Mr. Wordsworth, Mr. W. DaCosta, in the chair. This meeting, acting on the advice of an eminent firm of Solicitors in London, Messrs Collett, Wimbourn and Collet, appointed a committee of seven to draw up a draft petition to Parliament. On the 28th February 1829 a Meeting of the Committee read, discussed and approved of the thrice revised petition, had it engraved, and placed in the Town Hall for signature, and printed in several newspapers. A General Meeting of the Committee was held in the Town Hall, on the 20th April 1829, at which J.W. Ricketts was unanimously appointed the Agent of "the East-Indians," a designation, which, as including the whole body to which they belonged, they preferred to all others, to proceed to England as a deputy in support of the petition, and it was agreed that a fund should be raised "to promote the great and important objects contemplated by us." By the 18th of July 1829, subscriptions amounting to Rs. 12,677-5-6 had been received by the Committee.

### Petition reaches London

A small section of the Eurasian community, choosing for themselves the name of Indo-Britons as distinguished from East Indians, headed by Mr. Charles Reed and J.L. Heatly, the former a gentleman of considerable ability and possessed of a genius for litigation, opposed the action of the East Indian Committee, and did their best to invalidate and render abortive what had already been effected. The Indo-Britons were worsted in the discussion and their efforts rendered unavailing. J.W. Ricketts sailed for England in the *Andromache*, Captain R.L. Laws, and, after a protracted voyage, reached London on the 27th December, 1829, the very month in which Lord W. Bentinck, acting on the advice of Butterworth Baley and Sir Charles Metcalfe, abolished *Sati*, and the year which saw the suppression of the *thugs*. George the IV was entering on the last year of his reign. The Test and Corporation Acts of Charles II's reign, which excluded dissenters from civil offices unless they qualified themselves by taking the Sacrament according to the rules of the Church of England, had just been repealed. Pitt, Castlereagh, Canning, and the whole strength of the Whigs had unsuccessful-



fully advocated the remission of the disabilities of Roman Catholics. Ireland, under the complete control of Daniel O'Connell, the priests and the Catholic associations was on the verge of rebellion, clamouring for the admission to the Imperial Legislature of members of the Romish Church. The Metropolitan police and the Irish and Scotch constabulary were founded by Sir Robert Peel, and in the same year Benjamin Disraeli published his first novel, *Vivian Grey*, while Gladstone was an under-graduate of Christ's Church, Oxford. The Radicals of Glasgow and the west of Scotland, incited to rebellion by Richmond, the ever-to-be detested Government spy, armed with pikes, were shot down and ridden over on their way from Glasgow to Sterling by a party of dragoons; and Baird and Hardy, Scotch Radicals, were executed for treason, because they gave expression to political sentiments much less strong than may be met with any morning now in the columns of a liberal newspaper. Parliament was to meet in February of the following year, 1830. In that Parliament O'Connell introduced a bill for universal suffrage, triennial parliaments and vote by ballot which was rejected by a majority of 306 on the 28th May. When Ricketts landed in England, and during the whole period of his residence there, the great struggle for reform occupied the chief attention of statesmen and politicians, and through every grade of society the rising wave of liberalism was producing a commotion unequalled in the history of English politics. To gain the ear of statesmen, to get a hearing for the Petition of the East Indians from the Lords and Commons of England, and to produce an interesting debate in both Houses, amidst the turmoil of reform and the struggle of opposing statesmen, was no easy achievement, as Ricketts' countrymen were not slow to acknowledge. On his first landing in England, Ricketts interviewed the Chairman, Deputy Chairman, President of the Board of Control (Lord Ellenborough), and several Directors of the East India Company. By the middle of February he considered that he was in possession of sufficient data to warrant him in believing "that nothing in a satisfactory or tangible shape was to be looked for at the India House;" and he resolved to turn his undivided attention to Parliament. Accompanied by Mr. John Crawford, he called on the Right Honorable C.W. Williams Wynn and obtained his consent to present the Petition to the



House of Commons. The Earl of Carlisle undertook to present the Lords' petition. Lord Ashley, then a member of the Board of Control, received Mr. Ricketts with the greatest cordiality, entered with interest into the subject of his mission, was himself anxious to present the petition to the House of Lords, and would have done so, but for the influence brought to bear by the Board of Control and the Government. In the interest of East Indians and their petition, Mr. Ricketts corresponded with the Duke of Wellington, Lord Carlisle, the Right Hon'ble Sir Robert Peel, Lord Calthorpe, the Hon'ble Sir Alexander Johnston, for some time Chief Justice and President in Council, Ceylon, Sir John Bowring, then Dr. John Bowring, Editor of the *Westminster Review*, and others. He was also examined at great length before the Lords' Select Committee on the affairs of the East India Company, on the 31st March 1830, and before the Commons, on the 21st and 24th of June; and, although, on the last occasion, suffering from fever, he acquitted himself in a manner which won for him the highest praise.

#### Text of the petition

The following is the text of the East Indian Petition :—

To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned Christian inhabitants of Calcutta, and the provinces comprised within the Presidency of Fort William,

Humbly sheweth—

1. That your petitioners are members of a numerous increasing and widely-dispersed class of subjects of the Crown of Great Britain, living within the territories at present governed by the United Company of merchants trading to the East Indies, in the province of Bengal, and in the town of Calcutta.

2. That the body of which they compose a part, forms a distinct class of society in British India, which dates its existence more remotely from the time when the East India Company first formed permanent establishments on the continent of India, but chiefly from the more recent period, when the acquisition of immense territories required the presence of an increased number of Europeans to maintain and govern them.



3. That they are descended, in many instances, on the father's side, from the European subjects of the Crown of Great Britain, and on the mother's side, from the natives of India ; and that in other instances. they are the children of inter-marriages between the offsprings of such connexions and Indo-British couples; but that although thus closely allied to the European and Native races, they are excluded from almost all those advantages which each respectively enjoys, and are subject to peculiar grievances from which both are exempt.

#### A body of outlaws

4. The *first* grievance which your petitioners beg leave to bring to the notice of your Honourable House is, that a very large majority of the class to which they belong are entirely destitute of any rule of civil law, to which they can refer as a standard that is to regulate their conduct in the various relations of society. Those of your petitioners who live in Calcutta within the limited jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, are guided in their civil relations by the Laws of England; but the moment they pass beyond that jurisdiction, to reside either temporarily or permanently in the interior, they are thereby placed beyond the pale of all civil law, whether British, Hindu, or Muhamedan. By the rigid interpretation, which successive Judges of the Supreme Court of Judicature of Fort William, have given to the phrase "British subjects" in the various acts of Parliament relating to India, your petitioners are excluded from coming under that denomination, and are consequently prevented from enjoying the benefits of the Laws of England, and, by their profession of the Christian religion, they are equally debarred from the adoption of the Hindu or Muhamedan civil law; while there is no other civil code, to which they can have recourse as their guide in the various transactions and relations of life. However extraordinary the fact may appear, your petitioners, affirm, without fear of contradiction, that there is no law which regulates their marriages and makes them lawful,—there is no law which shows the rule that is to define the legitimacy or illegitimacy of their issue,—there is no law which prescribes the succession to their property,—there is no law which points out whether they possess the right of bequeathing by will, and, if so, to what extent,—there is no law that declares which of their



children or whether one or all shall succeed in case of intestacy. In these and other equally important particulars, they have no law to direct or control them; and they are thus treated as utterly unworthy of any one of those rights, which it is the express object of a code of civil law to define and the primary design of society and Government to protect. Your petitioners thus literally compose a great body of out-laws, not made so by any crimes of their own, and on that very account feeling the more deeply the legalized wrongs that have been inflicted on them, and the contemptuous indifference and neglect with which their anomalous civil condition has been regarded. It is not, however, the invidious judicial construction of the doubtful language of the Acts of Parliament, that has alone tended to degrade their civil condition; nor have they ever been permitted to enjoy the full advantage that would have arisen to them from the absolute and total neglect of that condition by their immediate rulers. A Rule and Regulation of the Government of the East India Company has, by clear and express definition, included your petitioners in the class of "native subjects of the British Government," and has thereby subjected them to the numerous disabilities of their Hindus and Muhamedan fellow-subjects; while, by another enactment of the local Government, they have, as belonging to the above-mentioned class, been deprived in a body of the protection of the Act of Habeas Corpus; having been made liable to be taken up on suspicion by any of the local authorities, and confined as State prisoners, without the legal possibility of ever obtaining their release; since the only appeal they could have would be to the local Government. Thus they are not virtually and by implication but directly and immediately, denuded of the first and most important of all civil rights—personal security; and they may, therefore, be justly considered as holding their property, their liberty, and even their lives at the discretion of every powerful public functionary.

#### **Law for punishment and not for protection**

5. The *second* grievance under which your petitioners labour is, that they are amenable in the interior to Mahomedan criminal law,—a law in itself barbarous and imperfect, founded on the most intolerant principles, and intimately interwoven with



a system of religion, and a state of society, wholly opposed to their opinions and habits. The law of Muhamed was promulgated only for believers in the Koran; and towards all who are considered infidels, it bears a most oppressive aspect. Many of the punishments, when specific, are of a sanguinary description; and in others, an almost unlimited discretion is given to the judge. It is arbitrarily administered; and, though a right of appeal is in many cases allowed to the Superior Court of Criminal Jurisdiction of the East India Company, called the Nizamut Adawlut, yet that tribunal possesses the extraordinary power, on such appeal, of increasing the punishment which is awarded at their discretion, and without hearing fresh evidence. The only modifications which the Muhamedan criminal code has received, in its application to your petitioners, have been produced by the supplementary Regulations of the East India Company, which, instead of softening and mitigating its inflictions, have in some instances, even increased the harshness of its character. In proof of this statement your petitioners beg to cite the third Regulation of the year 1821; by the express provisions of which, they are made liable, in all cases, to be dealt with as Hindu and Muhamedan matters of the lowest rank; and to be fined, imprisoned, and corporally punished, not merely at the discretion of the European Judges or Magistrates of the East India Company, but even of the Hindu and Muhomedan officers of justice; while from the operation of this Regulation, not only British subjects, in the restricted application which has been given to that appellation, but also, European and American foreigners resident in the interior are exempted. Thus the law recognizes the existence of your petitioners, only for the purpose of punishment, and never for that of protection, while the criminal code, to which they have been made amenable, is distinguished by the intolerance of its spirit, by the aggravated severity of its provisions, by its total incongruity with their religious belief and social condition, and by the deep-felt degradation to which, in its actual administration, your petitioners are subjected.

6. The *third* grievance, to which your petitioners are subject, is that they are excluded from all superior and covenanted offices in the Civil and Military services, and from all sworn offices in the Marine service of the East Indian Company. The



invariable preamble to the appointment of an individual to any of these services runs thus: "Provided AB. (the person receiving the appointment) be not the son of a native Indian," a restriction which was first adopted by the Directors of the East India Company on the 9th November 1791, and which is always republished in the *Gazette of Government*, on the notification of the appointment of any one who may be then residing in India.

The *fourth* grievance of your petitioners is that they are not only expressly excluded from all those offices of trust and emolument in the Civil, Military and Marine services of the East India Company's Government, which are open to "British subjects," but that they are also treated as ineligible to most of those subordinate employments in the Judicial Revenue and Police Departments, and even in the Military service, which are open without reserve to the Hindu and Muhamedan natives of the country. Your petitioners are prohibited from being appointed to the situations of Munsif, Sheristadar, and almost all other inferior Judicial offices; they are prevented from practising as Vakeels or Pleaders in every one of the court of justice of the East India Company, from the highest to the lowest; they are shut out from all the subordinate offices in the departments of General Revenue and Police; and in the army they are not permitted to fill the posts of native commissioned or non-commissioned officers, nor even that of a naick or corporal in a native regiment, although leave is given to them to shed their blood in the ranks as privates, and to officiate in the regimental band as drummers and musicians.

The *fifth* grievance, of which your petitioners complain, is, that they are expressly declared to be disqualified from holding His Majesty's commission in the British Indian Army. The Commander-in-Chief for the time being of His Majesty's Forces in India, on the 27th of February 1808, issued a general order, still in force, by which no person can be recommended in India for any vacant commission in His Majesty's service, who belongs to the class of which your petitioners compose a part.

The *sixth* grievance imposed upon your petitioners is that, by stipulations in treaties with all the powers in India, which still preserve a shadow of independence, they are debarred from employing your petitioners in any capacity, without the permission of the Supreme Government of India. It is true that, in



those treaties, only "Europeans and Americans" are expressly prohibited from being so employed; yet, although these are demonstrations under which your petitioners cannot be classed, the restriction is practically applied to them also.

### Equality demanded

The *last* grievance to which your petitioners will advert is that every plan proposed by others, or adopted by themselves, for the improvement of the class to which they belong instead of receiving the fostering countenance of the paternal Government, has met with positive disapproval, or cold neglect, strongly contrasted with the active and liberal encouragement that has been laudably given by the local authorities to various institutions formed for the benefit of other classes of the population. In support of this statement your petitioners beg to refer to the benevolent plan proposed by the late Colonel Kirkpatrick, in 1782, having for its objects to secure a provision for the sons of European officers by native mothers, by educating them in England, and obtaining cadetships for them in the Indian army. This scheme, which received the approbation of the whole military service, and was not opposed by the local Government, was rejected in the most unqualified manner by the Court of Directors; the residence of such children in Europe for education being that part of it, which especially called forth their reprobation. In the same manner, at a more recent period, two Institutions were commenced by the exertions of your petitioners, and devoted to the education of their children, called the Parental Academic Institution (now the Doveton College) and the Calcutta Grammar School, amidst severe pecuniary difficulties, and with the certain prospect of great advantage resulting from even a slight measure of assistance from Government, have been refused a participation with other similar institutions in those funds which the East India Company is required, by Act of Parliament, to apply to the moral and intellectual improvement of the Natives of India. Thus their European parents are frowned upon, for endeavouring to send them to England for education. Your petitioners themselves are discouraged in their humble attempts to extend the blessings of education among their own class in India. Every avenue of honourable ambition and of social improvement is shut up



against them; and it is with a keen and long cherished conviction of the wrongs they have suffered from the race of their European fathers and mothers that they now bring themselves to the notice of your Honourable House, and respectfully ask for that equality of rights and privileges, to which, in common with every other class of His Majesty's subjects, they are unquestionably entitled.

Your petitioners have now briefly enumerated the principal grievances, for which they seek redress from your Honourable House; but the statements they have made are very far from expressing the [depth and the extent of the degradation which has been entailed upon them, and the numerous ramifications of the evils which they suffer. What they have styled their grievances, are not individual cases of grievances peculiar to one person, one time, and one occasion; but they are classes of grievances, each class extending to the whole body to which your petitioners belong, and all of them spread over the entire period of existence, pervading every transaction and relation of life, and doubly felt, first, in their own persons and fortunes, and, secondly, in the condition and prospects of their rising offspring.

#### **Dissatisfaction and alienation feared**

However diversified and pervading the particular effects of the grievances your petitioners suffer, there is one unvarying general result which they produce: there is one point to which they are all made to tend, and that is, to place your petitioners in the situation of a prescribed class, to prevent their amalgamation with the European population, and to create and perpetuate against them the most mortifying and injurious prejudices. Your petitioners are aware that the abolition of those social prejudices; of which they are made the object, cannot be brought within the scope of legislative enactment; and it is with no such view that they seek for the interposition of your Honourable House. They trust to the loyalty and rectitude of their own conduct for that place and consideration in society which belong to them; but they think they have a right to complain when the acts of the legislative and governing powers, instead of having a tendency to neutralize and destroy the prejudices that exist against your petitioners, have had the direct and certain effect of calling them into existence. Your petitioners



neither ask nor expect any special interference in their behalf; but they warmly protest against those invidious distinctions which mark them, in the land of their birth, as outcasts and aliens, bereft of all privileges, and strangers alike to the rights of society, and to the feelings of humanity. It is surely not the characteristic of a paternal and an enlightened Government, which should be the common and equal protector of all its subjects, to scatter with its own hands the seeds of discord and to array the different classes of society against each other in bitter contempt and implacable hatred. Yet such is the undeniable tendency of the exclusive and contumelious system of misgovernment, under which your petitioners have long suffered, and which, if continued, must produce in the class to which they belong, hitherto free from the slightest reproach of disloyalty or disaffection, permanent dissatisfaction, and even entire alienation of mind from the British authority in India.

Your petitioners may be permitted to observe that, however strong the language they have deemed it requisite to employ in the exposition of their grievances, and however acute the feelings of which that language is the feeble and imperfect expression, they have never lost sight of the obedience and respect which have been claimed by their immediate rulers. From them, indeed, the condition of your petitioners has not received the consideration which they had a right to expect, and which they earnestly hope your Honourable House will bestow. Their complaints when presented in the most respectful terms, through the proper channels, have been treated as futile and unfounded; nor has any disposition been shown to alleviate the acknowledged extreme hardships under which they suffer. To the East India Company, therefore, in its own character, or to its local Government, your petitioners, as a body, feel that they owe nothing. They have received from it no sympathy or redress—nothing but studied insult, contemptuous indifference, or at best empty profession. But in that Company and its servants, your petitioners see the legally constituted representatives of British power and authority in India, and they have therefore conscientiously discharged the duties of peaceable and obedient subjects, in the fond, although hitherto vain expectation, that their peculiar grievances would attract the attention of those who have the ability, and, they trust, the will to remedy them.



Your petitioners hope that it is only necessary to bring to the notice of your Honourable House the evils which have been entailed upon their body to produce at once the disposition to remove them.

They pray your Honourable House to admit them to the fellowship of their fathers and mothers to rescue them from subjection to institutions the most degrading and despotic, and to treat them as subjects of the British Crown, to which alone they recognize their allegiance to be due ; and to which they desire to bind themselves and their posterity by the indissoluble ties of justice and of gratitude.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

Mr. Ricketts' evidence before both Houses of Parliament which followed the debates in both the Houses, contains a mass of valuable information relating to Eurasians, Calcutta Institutions, means of education, and other interesting matters which at the present day will, we are sure, be read with interest. We have ventured to summarise it, prefixing the following note of Mr. Ricketts :—

#### **Evidence before House of Lords**

"On the 31st of March, in obedience to a summons from the House of Lords. I attended to give evidence before their select Committee on the affairs of India.

The Committee Meeting was well attended, and the Duke of Wellington was also present on the occasion. Most of the Peers showed an inclination to draw out to public view, by the fair drift of their questions, the aggravated evils of our civil and political condition; while Lord Ellenborough was the only one among them, who, assuming a sort of ex-officio position in the affair, endeavoured, by the ordinary process of cross examination, to palliate and soften down, as much as possible, the otherwise glaringly self-evident hardship of our case."

I am a native of Calcutta, the bearer of a Petition from a portion of the inhabitants of that town, and of the Presidency of Fort William, which has been presented to the House of Lords. The Petition is signed by between six and seven hundred, mostly persons immediately descended from European fathers or mothers, as well as of intermarriages between these descendants. Our first grievance is, that we are destitute of civil



law. We are not recognised as British subjects by the Supreme Court of Calcutta if residing in the Muffussil; we are thrown upon the jurisdiction of the Muffussil Courts which are regulated by the Muhamedan law. As Christians, we cannot avail ourselves of the Muhamedan civil law though we are subject to the Criminal Code. In all that regards marriages and succession to property; we are without any definite rule of civil law by which our affairs can be regulated. The provisions of the Muhamedan Criminal Code are barbarous, as applicable to a Christian population, even though the Code is modified by the Company's Regulations. We may appeal to the Sudder Dewany Adawlat in Calcutta; but in the year 1821, when the question of appeal was tried, it was the opinion of the Judge that we could not claim a right of appeal to the Supreme Court: even though the Sudder Dewany Adawlat Court possessed the power of increasing the punishment without fresh evidence being adduced. We are excluded from all superior covenanted offices, either by the positive Regulations of the Company or by the established usage of the service. It is provided by Regulation that the son of a native Indian shall not be appointed to the regular service of the Company, or to the Military service of the Company. Even the descendants of intermarriages are not eligible, but there has been some modification of this within the last two years by order of the Court of Directors, though there is no law on the subject. I know instances in which persons not immediately descended from native mothers have been refused appointments under the Company, simply on account of their parentage,—and if there has been an alteration of the phraseology of the the Company's Regulations since 1827, the fact of refusal of appointments remains unchanged. We are not allowed to act as pleaders in any of the Courts. We can hold no commissions in the Company's or the Kings's service. We may be drummers and fifers, but I am not aware of any instance in which a member of the community has been advanced to the rank of corporal, the order withholding commissions was passed in the year 1808, by the Commander-in-Chief, and it has never been repealed. There are instances of deviation from this rule. Some of our class were admitted into both the civil and military services prior to the prohibition. The Quartermaster-General of the



army is an East Indian, admitted before 1791, and Mr. Achmuty, of the civil service, Colonel Skinner is an officer who has served with great distinction. He is the son of a native mother. I have never heard of any objection on the part of the natives of India to serve under him, or any objection on account of his mother having lost caste. Members of our class who take service under native States are required to return to the Company's territories on the outbreak of war. The Maratha officers who were employed in the year 1801 and 1802 were invited back to the Company's territories under promise of being pensioned. Some availed themselves of the pension, others were barbarously murdered by the native princes, the moment they were aware of their intention, to leave the State. Treaties with native States prevent, Europeans, from taking service, but we are, in this instance recognised sometimes as Europeans, and, sometimes as natives, as it serves the purposes of the Government. We are recognised as natives except within the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court,—and yet the officers who were employed by the Maratha States of Scindia and Holkar were threatened to be dealt with as traitors if they did not return to the Company's territories. The Public and private schools for the education of children of East Indians have never received assistance from Government in any shape whatever. We are excluded from participating in the grant for the education of the natives of India. The number of East Indians would not, I think, be overrated, were they estimated at 20,000 more or less in Calcutta and all the province. There was a police report made in the year 1822, and the Christian population in Calcutta alone was estimated at 13,138 of which there were 2,254 Europeans; consequently we were included in the remainder, that is, 10,884. Since 1822, the number must have considerably increased. We outnumber the Europeans very considerably, and our number is on the increase owing to the increased number of Europeans and of inter-marriage.....We are principally employed in subordinate capacities in the public offices of Government, chiefly as clerks. During the Nepaul war East Indians were employed in the irregular corps; but the corps was disbanded. I say, with perfect confidence, that there are many persons of half-blood qualified to hold high positions. I



dare say we might collect about 500 so qualified. Many are employed in trade of various kinds, in the Calcutta and China, trade, as officers and captains of ships, and as merchants. Baretto's house was considered one of the wealthiest in India; there are also Lackersteen's Brightman and Bruce, and Allan's houses. The educational establishments for the education of East Indians in Calcutta are—the Military Orphan School, Parental Academic Institution (now Doveton College), and the Calcutta Grammar School. In the Military Orphan schools, Upper and Lower, there are perhaps 800, including both sexes. There are from 130 to 140 in the Parental Academic Institution, and about 40 or 50 in the Grammar School. Besides these there are private schools Pupils continue in school till the age of 17 or 18, and there is no collegiate education in Calcutta, unless it be in the Bishop's College, which is confined to Missionary purposes. The Parental Academic Institution has succeeded to a happy extent in raising the tone of education in the country. There are other persons of half-blood who have no education, and are in a state of great destitution; their children are educated at the Free School, and the Benevolent Institution. The children of European soldiers by native mothers are brought up at the Lower Orphan School and sent out as drummers, fifiers or apprenticed to tradesmen. Three different applications were made to the Government, one for medicines for the Parental Academic Institution, and two for pecuniary assistance. All were refused, although the assistance sought for would have been as valuable for the sanction it would have afforded the school as from the amount of pecuniary and East Indians have been employed as preachers, missionaries and teachers,—and in these positions have never subjected themselves to any degree of censure or reproach. The influence they possess in such occupations would be very much increased by the removal of the restrictions to which they are at present subject. It is a thing for which the natives themselves cannot account, that the Government should reject, as it does, their own Christian offspring, and treat them with marked neglect and proscription. My opinion of the education in Calcutta is such that having brought two of my own sons to England for education, and not being satisfied with what I have seen in the country, it is my intention to take them back to Calcutta. As natives of the country and as fixtures of the soil, the East



Indians might be rendered instruments of great good to the country. If the real interests of India be sought, they cannot be more effectually promoted than through the instrumentality of those who have been born, educated, and are destined to spend their lives in the country. Dr. Marshman made an application for pecuniary assistance for the Benevolent Institution, which the Government complied with. Mr. Thomason made an application for the Female Asylum; this was also granted; and grants have been made to other institutions in consequence of applications from Europeans in their behalf, such as the Free School and others. My father was an ensign in the Engineers, and died at the Siege of Seringapatam, in 1792. I was educated in the school supported by the army, the Military Orphan School, and never went to another. Many of my countrymen, who have been educated in England, Scotland, and Ireland have, on their going back to India, been so much disappointed at the state of things, that they have, in many instances, returned to Europe to seek a living, finding that the door was completely shut against them in their native land I mean men of first rate education. There was a son of a General officer, who returned in 1825; he had obtained the diploma of a doctor of medicine, but he found that the state of society was such as to compel him to return to Europe, and I believe he is now practising in England. There have been some other instances of this kind.

#### Before the House of Commons

The leading points in Mr. Ricketts' examination before the House of Commons are as follows:—

"I am the agent of certain parties in the town of Calcutta, who have presented a Petition to the House of Commons. They have been called by various names, such as Eurasians, Anglo-Indians, Indo-Britains, Half-Castes, &c., but they have latterly selected the name of East Indians for themselves. The class of persons included in that designation are the descendants of European British subjects and European foreigners by native mothers, legitimate and illegitimate, as well as their offspring. The religion or caste of the native mothers of most of the East Indians within the Province of Bengal are Muhamedans of respectable families, but reduced circumstance; they are in many instances Moghuls and Pathans. There are a large



proportion of the officers in the Company's service married to East Indian ladies.

"The disadvantages we labour under are set forth in the Petition of which I am the bearer. We are liable to be fined, imprisoned, and corporally punished at the discretion of the Judge, or to trial for capital crime, and in none of these instances can we claim the intervention of a jury. We are excluded from the regular service of the Company, civil and military, and none but the subordinate situations of clerks are open to us. Before 1791 the Company's service, civil and military, was open to us, and the Bombay army was commanded by General Jones, an East Indian, during the campaigns of 1803 and 1805. The present Quartermaster-General of the Army, Colonel Stevenson, is also an East Indian. There are also members of the community in the King's army, such as Major Deare, Captain Rutledge, Lieutenant Mullins, and others. Colonel Skinner is in the Irregular service; he has commanded from 8,000 to 10,000 troops. In the medical profession there have been Drs. Lumsdain, Breton and Lycke; the latter practised in Calcutta and retired to England with a fortune; there have also been Drs. Frith, Gordon, Clarke Imlach, Dick, Freer, and Casey, all East Indians, and more or less eminent in their profession. Besides these professions, there are East Indians engaged as Indigo Planters, Schoolmasters, Architects, Carvers and Gilders, Undertakers, &c., and the East Indian commercial houses in Calcutta are the firms of Lackersteen, Vignon, Mendes, Baretto and Brightman, and Mr. Kid is the Master Ship Builder of the Company in Calcutta. The sons of private soldiers by native women are employed as drummers and fifers in the army and apprenticed to trades at the expense of the Lower Orphan School, which was founded for the reception and education, along with the Upper Military Orphan School, of between 800 and 900 children. The Upper Orphan School is intended for the sons of officers by native women. Both schools have been established by the army, not by the Company, and the legitimate children are sent to that branch of the institution which is in England. A large proportion of the lower class of East Indians used to be much neglected but the European Asylum, the Benevolent Institution, the Free School, the Parental Academy (now Doveton College), the Calcutta Grammar School, and



other schools have spread education much more extensively than formerly. The usual salary of an East Indian employed as a clerk is between Rs. 50 and 100 a month. I think that an East Indian might perform the duties of Judge or Collector for one-third the salary of a European with comfort to himself and advantage to the public service. An East Indian being a native of the soil, his views and prospects are confined to India, and he has no idea of amassing a large fortune to return to a distant land, where he would be subject to expenses from which he is exempt in India. East Indians who have been in the Company's services in various capacities, in the professions and in mercantile pursuits, have been as much respected as Europeans have been in these positions. There is no distinction made by the natives between East Indians and Europeans; the distinction emanates from the authorities of this country. They first originated the distinction, and then used it as an argument for keeping us where we are. The prejudices against us have diminished of late. A much more liberal policy has been adopted towards the descendants of European fathers by native mothers by the Dutch, French, Spaniards and Portuguese in all their settlements. Two-thirds of the council of Ceylon are composed of gentlemen born on the island. Sir Alexander Johnston found them the most efficient instruments in the public service, and with their assistance he was enabled to carry the measure of slave emancipation, and bring into operation trial by jury. I was educated entirely in the Upper Military Orphan School of Calcutta, and was taught reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, the use of the globes, English grammar, &c., but neither Latin nor Greek.

Up to the year 1827 East Indians were excluded from sitting upon grand or petty juries; since then, they are admissible by law to sit on juries, and have been summoned and served in common with Europeans. We are held in equal respect by the natives of India, with Europeans. I could instance the case of Indigo-planters and merchants who are scattered in different parts of the country, who are visited by Princes and Nabobs; as Europeans are, and treated with equal respect. Rammohun Roy, "a learned and respectable native in Calcutta," associates with us as he does with Europeans, and so would any other respectable native.



The native mothers of East Indians are chiefly Muhamedans; there are some Hindus. The natives identify us with our fathers, and make no inquiry regarding our mothers. It would be an improvement of our class; it would tend to the general improvement of society, if we were placed exactly upon a footing with British-born subjects not in the King's or the Company's services. The odious distinction now made strikes at the root of all civil and social improvement in India."

### Some relief granted

The result of the Eurasian Movement of 1829-30 was, the passing in the year 1832, when a new Charter was granted to the Company, of what is known as the *Lexi Loci* Act, which in some measure freed East Indians from the anomalous position they occupied in the eye of the law.

## F. Tragedy in Love<sup>11</sup>

VASANT DINANATH RAO

During the seventeenth century, stories about riches of the East spread among the European countries. Scores of young and beautiful spinsters came to India in search of wealthy husbands. A few entered the harems of the Indian rulers. Mastani, the heroine of the following tragical tale was the offspring of such one union, the illegitimate daughter of King Chhatrasal from a young European widow, whose merchant husband Ludlow died at Bundelkhand. Cadwalladar Cumberbund in his book "From Southampton to Calcutta" (1860) says "that several spinsters, who refuse handsome treasury clerks and big bellied merchants at home, often surrender their freedom by coupling with half caste Adonises of the same calling in India. A certain Mrs. Smith a lady with the sweetest of eyes, and hair of golden light, had for husband one of these Ebonites, who after her was called black Smith—a disciple of Vulcan." Cumberbund regretfully quotes Maugre :—"Skins may differ, but affection dwells in white and black the same." (Ed.)

### Origin of Mastani

The origin of Mastani is shrouded in mystery. No less than three theories about her origin are current and it would be



worth our while to examine each of these in the light of historical material supporting it.

(1) According to the first theory, Mastani was a courtesan in the keep of a Muslim sardar, Shahjatkhan<sup>12</sup> by name. She was found by Bajeerao's brother Chimaji Appa while attempting to commit suicide by swallowing poison and was dissuaded from the suicidal attempt by him on his assurance that his brother Bajeerao would accept her as his mistress on his return from Bundelkhand. The solitary piece of historical evidence in support of this theory is the account given in Peshwas' Bakhar<sup>13</sup>. In the absence of any further historical corroboration of this account and there being very little evidence as to who was this Shahjatkhan and how Chimaji Appa happened to come across his courtesan, this is hardly acceptable.

(2) According to the second theory; Mastani was the daughter of the Nizam who on the advice of his wife presented her to Bajeerao after performing a mock ceremony of her marriage with a dagger (Khanjeer), hoping thereby to promote the diplomatic relations with the Marathas. This theory has for its basis an account contained in a letter embodied in Kavayetihas Sangraha.<sup>14</sup> This too, like the previous one, is not supported by any further historical evidence and hence not worthy of much credit.

(3) The third and universally accepted theory is that Mastani was either a courtesan at the darbar of King Chhatrasal of Bundelkhand or his illegitimate daughter (probably the latter) and that she was given to Bajeerao by Chhatrasal as a token of gratitude for the signal services rendered by the former to the latter in repelling the invasions of Mohmedkhan Bangash on Bundelkhand. This theory is corroborated by an account given in a Marathi bakhar<sup>15</sup>. Pogson<sup>16</sup> and General Briggs<sup>17</sup> support this theory. Rao Bahadur Parasnis<sup>18</sup> refers to a genealogical account got directly from the descendants of Mastani as supporting this theory. Pandit Kalidas in his Nivandha Chandrika<sup>19</sup> alludes to an old history of Bundelkhand written in Urdu as giving a similar account of the origin of Mastani. Unfortunately this Urdu book is not available. This theory is thus supported by historical evidence as well as by common tradition. It must however be accepted with caution in the absence of substantial direct historical evidence.



In addition to the above theories about the origin of Mastani, I propose to put forth a new theory of her origin, which has for its basis an account contained in a letter found in the Peshwa Daftar.<sup>20</sup> This letter is unsigned and the identity of its writer cannot be ascertained therefrom. From its language and phraseology, it appears to have been written to Bajerao by some Muhamedan (possibly a slave dealer). It is suggested by this letter that Mastani was a slave girl either purchased or taken forcibly by Bajerao from some slave dealer. This new theory is indeed, a highly speculative one, based as it is on an unsigned and obscure letter. This is quite plausible, however, if we look to the social conditions of the time which allowed slave trafficking (regulated, of course, by certain rules). Some of the letters from the Peshwa Daftar throw much interesting light on the slave trade of the time.<sup>21</sup>

#### **Bajerao's love for Mastani**

Whatever be the origin of Mastani, she had undoubtedly entered into Bajerao's life some time in 1729 or 1730. The earliest reference to her in the historical records is to be found in a letter dated 14th February 1730,<sup>22</sup> containing a statement about the costs of dresses presented to Mastani on the occasion of the marriage of Nanasaheb (Bajerao's eldest son). In 1733 or 1734, Mastani bore a son to Bajerao who was named Samsher Bahadur. There is no direct evidence of the date or year of Samsher's birth, but it can be ascertained from certain old sources<sup>23</sup> that he died at the battle of Panipat in 1761 at the age of twenty-seven. Computing backwards from this year, we get 1734 as the year of Samsher's birth. The birth of Samsher was an important landmark in the life of Mastani in as much as it brought about an amelioration in her status in the Peshwa family. This is seen from the fact that a separate apartment for the residence of Mastani was built in the Peshwa's palace in 1736.<sup>24</sup> Mastani at this time seems to have enjoyed a status of equality with Bajerao's lawful wife Kashibai, as can be inferred from a letter written by Baburao Ram Fadnis (father of the famous Nana Fadnis) stating that no distinction was made between Kashibai and Mastani.<sup>25</sup>



### Licentious habits

For some years (upto the beginning of the year 1739 to be precise) things went on smoothly and the domestic peace of the Peshwa family remained unruffled in spite of the presence of Muhamedan mistress in the Palace. Clouds however began to gather on the horizon, threatening the domestic tranquillity of the Peshwa household when about the middle of 1739, there began talks about the celebration of the thread ceremony of Raghunath and marriage of Sadashivrao. Bajeerao had been for many years past leading a licentious life freely indulging in the strictly forbidden vices of drinking and eating flesh and openly associating with a Muhamedan mistress. These licentious habits of Bajeerao, the result of the long and constant contact with the pleasure loving people of the north were so far connived at. But now when the priestly class of Poona was consulted in the matter of the proposed thread and marriage ceremonies at Peshwas' house, they took this opportunity of strongly protesting against the unorthodox and licentious course of the voluptuous enjoyments pursued by Bajeerao and flatly refused to associate with him in any religious ceremonies.

### Trouble for Mastani

Trouble began for Mastani now; for the whole blame for Bajeerao's licentiousness was thrown on the head of Mastani by the elderly members of Peshwa family. Chimaji Appa and Nanasaheb believing the licentiousness of Bajeerao to be due to his contact with Mastani<sup>26</sup> saw no other way of ending the deadlock but to separate Mastani from Bajeerao. The first step in this direction was taken by placing sentries round the apartments of Mastani to make it impossible for her to have access to Bajeerao.<sup>27</sup> Bajeerao thereupon left Poona and went to Patas.<sup>28</sup> Mastani, however seems to have managed to escape from her palace on about 24th November 1739 and joined Bajeerao at Patas.<sup>29</sup>

Matters stood thus when the Maratha Sardar Mahadajee-panta for whom Bajeerao entertained high regard, was dispatched to Patas by Bajeerao's mother to persuade him to give up his licentious mode of life.<sup>30</sup> Mahadajee succeeded in persuading Bajeerao to send Mastani back to Poona.<sup>31</sup> It also appears that Bajeerao took a vow not to drink.<sup>32</sup> This did not, however,



improve matters. Bajerao was ill at ease on account of his separation from Mastani<sup>33</sup> and still persisted in the wild course of debauchery. Chimaji in a letter to Nanasaheb disgustingly refers to the growing licentiousness of Bajerao and suggested that nothing short of total removal of Mastani would remedy matters.<sup>34</sup> It appears that Mastani though sent to Poona, was communicating with Bajerao.<sup>35</sup> She was again interned in the palace and all communications between her and Bajerao were stopped.<sup>36</sup> Bajerao, smitten with pangs of separation, promises to give up drinking if Mastani is restored to him,<sup>37</sup> Chimaji Appa, however, has no longer any faith in such promises of Bajerao and feels sure that Bajerao's remaining with Mastani would, instead of improving matters make them worse.<sup>38</sup>

By the beginning of the year 1740 it appears to have been finally resolved by Chimaji Appa and Nanasaheb to take steps to bring about a complete separation between Bajerao and Mastani.<sup>39</sup> Mastani was still under a strict watch and she seems to have even gone on a hunger strike as a protest against her confinement.<sup>40</sup> Nanasaheb in a letter<sup>41</sup> to Chimaji Appa intimates to him of her hunger strike and asks for further instructions as to how he should proceed in the matter. It appears that they had decided upon arresting her and Chimaji instructs Nanasaheb to gain her confidence to facilitate her arrest.<sup>42</sup>

### Forced separation of lovers

While Mastani's arrest was under contemplation by Nanasaheb and Chimaji. King Shahu who seems to have been informed of the plan, warned them through the royal secretary Govind Khanderao Chitnis against taking such drastic measures.<sup>43</sup> Shahu does not seem to hold Mastani responsible for Bajerao's licentiousness and forbids harm being done to her.<sup>44</sup> He indeed advised the restoration of Mastani to Bajerao.<sup>45</sup> In spite of this royal warning Nanasaheb arrested Mastani in the Parvati gardens and arranged to keep her in close confinement in the Palace.<sup>46</sup> It seems that it was originally planned to keep her confined in some distant and inaccessible fort which indicates that Nanasaheb and Chimaji apprehended Bajerao's intervention.<sup>47</sup> Nanasaheb informs Chimaji about the arrest of Mastani by a letter dated 26th January 1740.<sup>48</sup> This letter throws a good deal of light on the circumstances of Mastani's arrest and the



plans of Nanasaheb and others in this respect. Nanasaheb's statement in the letter to the effect that no force had to be used at the time of her arrest indicates the preparedness on his part to have resort to violence if necessary in effecting the arrest.<sup>49</sup> The assurance given by Nanasaheb in the same letter that she (Mastani) would not be put to death suggests the extent to which they were prepared to go in carrying out their plan.<sup>50</sup> Nanasaheb however was afraid that the repercussions of this step on Bajerao might be so strong as to drive him to attempt to force her release<sup>51</sup> or commit suicide.

All this was being planned when Bajerao was still away from Poona. Even though it was quite possible to force the liberation of Mastani by resort to armed force, he wisely abstained from such a step preventing thereby the sowing of seeds of domestic strife and civil war. Nanasaheb and Chimaji as remarked above did in fact apprehend a move in this direction from him.<sup>52</sup> Even Mastani had similar apprehensions, but she gave a solemn promise to Nanasaheb not to leave the palace without his permission.<sup>53</sup>

This forced separation of Mastani from Bajerao, however, failed to appease the Brahmin priests of Poona who stoutly refused to officiate at the thread and marriage ceremonies at the Peshwas' house while Bajerao was present. In the circumstances these ceremonies had to be performed in his absence in February 1740. This was too much for Bajerao who was already deeply afflicted by Mastani's separation and in sheer disgust and despair he made for Burhanpur on 7th March 1740.<sup>54</sup>

### Tragical end

Chimaji Appa now realized the futility of the forced separation between Bajerao and Mastani and advised Nanasaheb to release Mastani and send her to Bajerao.<sup>55</sup> This advice was not however, immediately acted upon by Nanasaheb who instead of sending Mastani, sent Kashibai (Bajerao's wife) to him. The strain of mental agonies was too great for Bajerao who had a sudden breakdown while on the bank of the river Narbada and died three days later.<sup>56</sup> Fate willed that the life of this great Peshwa, to whom the great Maratha empire owed much of its glories should end in an unrelieved tragedy ;



even he was denied the comfort of having by his side during his last moments his beloved mistress for whom it may be said with truth he sacrificed his life. Mastani was released from her captivity and allowed to proceed to meet Bajerao;<sup>57</sup> but it was too late. She received the news of Bajerao's death on her way, at Pabal, about 30 miles away from Poona. The shock was too great for her and she died immediately on the receipt of the grievous news. It is not known how Mastani met her end; she might have died of heart-failure or might have committed suicide by swallowing the poison ring which the ladies of those days always used to carry about their persons. The fact of her end at Pabal is, however, corroborated by her tomb which can still be seen at the village. Thus ended this tragic episode in the life of one of the greatest soldiers of Maratha period.

## G. A Malabar Belle

CHARLES A. KINCAID

Eliza was born in 1744 at Anjengo,<sup>58</sup> in Malabar, where her father was employed in the English store. A district of jungles and mudflats and endless creeks; a village of thatched cottages hidden among tall palms that hissed and swayed in the warm damp wind. There was no school here for Eliza and one can only suppose that it was from her parents that she learnt her varied accomplishments. She was ugly, and yet even as a child there is evidence of her extraordinary charm. The tree under which she used to rest after her evening stroll along the beach was known for a century as "Eliza's Tree". The Abbe Raynal who met her long afterwards in Bombay wrote ecstatically of her fascination. "Anjengo," he exclaimed, "you are nothing but you have given birth to Eliza!" and the Abbe knew all the most accomplished women in Paris in that great age of conversation, wit and charm. And James Forbes, who so seldom praised without qualification, admitted with a sigh that a description of her attraction was beyond his powers. "Her refined tastes and elegant accomplishments need no encomium from my pen." But in Anjengo there were few to admire her



and she must have been grateful to Mr. Daniel Draper who, on a visit from Bombay, proposed to her. Gloomy, pompous and twenty years older than Eliza, he must nevertheless have seemed a most desirable husband both to Eliza and her parents, for he was a great man in Bombay, Secretary to Government and already spoken of as destined to the highest posts. She was happy with him at first and when, some years later, he suggested a visit to England she was enraptured. On the ship were two Bombay friends, Commodore and Mrs. James. The Commodore was something of a hero, for he had attacked and broken the power of Angria : while his wife was a woman of culture with many friends in literary London. Among them was Lawrence Sterne, and she enjoyed "the almost unique distinction of being the only woman outside his own family circle whom Sterne never approached in the language of artificial gallantry, but always in that of simple friendship and respect". Soon after they arrived in London, Mrs. James gave a dinner-party and among the guests were the Drapers and Sterne. Sterne fell instantly and desperately in love with the ugly but fascinating girl from India, and she was swept off her feet by his tempestuous and tragic style of wooing (so different from Daniel's formal expressions of affection). He affected to believe her still unmarried and would write—

"Pray, Eliza, do not think of giving yourself to some wealthy nabob, because I design to marry you myself. My wife cannot live long—she has sold all the provinces of France already. And I know not the woman I should like so well for her substitute as yourself. Tis true I am ninety-five in constitution and you but twenty-five—rather too great a disparity this?—but what I want in youth I will make up in wit and good humour. Not Swift so loved his Stella, Scarron his Maintenon, or Waller his Sacharina as I will love thee and sing thee, my wife elect."

Eliza who knew nothing of Sterne's life believed all this rigmale. "I believed Sterne," she cried, "implicitly I believed him : I had no motive to do otherwise than believe him just, generous and unhappy." In the letters they exchanged she called him "mild, generous and good youth" and he called her his



"Bramine". But when Mr. Draper's leave came to an end Eliza had to follow her husband back to Bombay. Sterne's letters became increasingly hysterical. "Eliza, from the highest Heaven, my first and last country, receive my oath ; I swear not to write one line in which my friend may not be recognised." They were not destined to meet again, for soon after Eliza's return Sterne "was taken ill at the silk-bag shop in Old Bond Street" ; he was carried home to his lodgings and there "put up his hand as if to stop a blow and died in a minute". Mrs. Sterne and her daughter, finding some copies of Sterne's letters to Eliza, tried to blackmail her with the threat of publication. Eliza wrote in alarm from Bombay to Mrs. James. "To add to my regret for his loss, his widow has my letters in her power (I never entertained a good opinion of her) and means to subject me to disgrace and inconvenience by the publication of them." Although this threat never materialised, the rumour of Eliza's correspondence with an eminent man of letters had, as Eliza complained, "somehow become extremely public at this settlement" and in her constant alarm lest the rumour should reach Daniel's ears she must have been very grateful for his sudden transfer from Bombay to Tellichery where he had been appointed chief of the factory. She was happy in this new station and tried to forget the past. She began to interest herself in her husband's work and even worked as his amanuensis. She enjoyed her new importance as wife of the head of the factory, she was flattered by the deference of the Indian employees and merchants, and in her letters she extolled their superior culture, describing the place as the "Montpellier of India". She wrote:—

"the Country is pleasant and healthy . . . our house a Magnificent one, furnished too at our Master's expense and the allowance for supporting it Creditably what you would term Genteely, tho' it does not defray the charge of our Liquors which alone amount to six hundred a year. . . . Our Society at other times is very confined as it only consists of a few Factors and two or three Families ; and such we cannot expect great intercourse with, on account of the heavy rains and terrible thunder and lightening to which this coast is peculiarly subject six months in the year. 'Tis call'd that of Malabar . . . Mahe is not more than seven Miles Distant



from us (Yet very few civilities pass between us and the Monsieurs) and Cochin (a Sweet Spot) about two Days' Sail."

Unfortunately for Eliza's virtuous resolutions Daniel received a new promotion and was recalled to Bombay and appointed Member of Council. Once more Eliza attracted admiration and when she appeared at balls at Government House in hoop and farthingale factors and cadets besieged her for dances. There was not, of course, much competition; there were only thirty-nine ladies in the station, thirty-three of them married, five widows and one "Winnifred Daires, Unmarried Woman" as she was somewhat ungallantly described on an invitation list. The Governor was then Hornby, and his interest in magic and the fact that he was "ignorant not only of the first principles of Government, but of the ordinary knowledge requisite for a gentleman" did not prevent him from giving a series of successful balls at which Eliza was always the chief attraction. The Drapers now lived in a house at Mazagon, called Belvidere, a long yellow building, formerly a Portuguese convent, on a mound overlooking the sea and pleasantly shaded by palms. Cadets and factors would walk along the sands in the mornings to call on the Drapers (morning calls were then fashionable), and would sit and talk in the airy drawing-room. They were probably very cheerful, for the first morning visit of almost every cadet was to some other cadet's quarters where he would be welcomed with draughts of punch and of "arrack and water, which, however cool and pleasant at the moment was succeeded by the most deleterious effects." Then, sufficiently refreshed, they would set out on their calls, not without some jeers at the few virtuous youths "who devoted their morning hours to music, drawing, literary improvement and other rational pursuits". Probably the visits and compliments of the young factors and cadets would have kept Eliza amused without involving her in any serious entanglement, but for the sudden interest that the severe and frigid Daniel began to take in the housekeeper, Mrs. Leeds. Eliza noticed that when he went to his bedroom for his afternoon siesta, he used to call for Mrs. Leeds to help him put on the "Conjee cap" that he wore in place of his wig when resting. It always appeared to take Mrs. Leeds a long time to



help him with his cap and Eliza had to protest against "your avowed preference for Leeds to myself", but Daniel paid no attention. It is difficult to blame Eliza for finding compensation in the ardent suit of a naval officer called Clark; and when Daniel's middle-aged infatuation for Mrs. Leeds made life at Belvidere intolerable for Eliza, she let herself down by a rope from her bedroom window and took refuge on Clark's ship, leaving behind a pathetic note for her husband, "I go. I know not whither, but I will never be a tax on you, Draper. I am not a hardened or depraved creature. The enclosed are the only bills that I know of, except six rupees to Doojee, the shoe-maker." She was received with enthusiasm in literary circles in London and now, no longer troubled by scruples over their effect on Mr. Draper, authorised the publication of Sterne's letters to her. She died in 1778 and was buried at Bristol. The epitaph on her tomb "In her Genius and Benevolence were united" is a curious contrast to that on the gravestone of Sterne, "Ah! Molliter ossa quiescant." Daniel, having become President of the Bombay Council, retired in great affluence and lived very virtuously in St. James's Street where no one had heard of Mrs. Leeds.

### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. A modern name for persons of mixt European and Indian blood, devised as being more euphemistic than Half-caste and more precise than *East-Indian* ("No name has yet been found or coined which correctly represents this section. Eurasian certainly does not. When the European and Anglo-Indian Defence Association was established 17 years ago, the term *Anglo-Indian*, after much consideration, was adopted as best designating this community." (Proceedings *Anglo-Indian Association*, in Pioneer Mail, April, 13, (1900).

"The shovel-hats are surprised that the Eurasian does not become a missionary or a school master, or a policeman, or something of that sort. The native papers say, 'Deport him'; the white prints say, 'Make him a soldier'; and the *Eurasian* himself says, 'make me a Commissioner give me a pension.'—*Ali Baba*, 123.

2. The following account of the life of Michael Madhu Sudhan Dutt (1824-1873) is adapted from Buckland's Dictionary of Indian Biography. "Son of Raj Narayan Dutt, a pleader in the Sudder Court: born January 25, 1824. Educated in the Hindu College under Derozi. When his father wished him to marry, he ran away to the missionaries and on February



9, 1843, was baptized as a Christian: remained at Bishop's College, Calcutta, from 1843 to 1847, and then went to Madras, where he lived in great poverty: returning to Calcutta in 1850 he became interpreter in the Police Court. In 1862 he went to England and was called to the Bar: practised at the Calcutta Bar from 1867, but without any marked success. His improvidence and failings ruined a promising career, and he died in a charitable hospital in Calcutta on June 29, 1873. In literary circles his memory is treasured; he helped to promote a national drama and theatre: produced some meritorious dramas, farces, and poems; and was well acquainted with several European and Oriental languages, besides Greek and Latin. Enjoyed a considerable reputation as a writer of Bengali blank verse which he created and introduced into the language."

3. The maiden name of the lady is not stated in any of the biographies of Michael Dutt. But Mr. S. Kumar, of the Imperial Library, who has been good enough to make enquiries, informs us that in the year 1856 (which was about the time of the marriage) there were two tutors on the staff of the Madras Presidency College, L. Dique, fifth tutor, and A. Dique, sixth tutor, whose names appear to indicate a French origin. It is possible that they may have been related to the second Mrs. Dutt.

4. Dr. Hunter spells it Sutanuti but the old Anglo-Indian orthography indicate *Chatanati* and in the letter-books of the Factory Council in the India Office the earlier letters down to 27th March are dated from 'Chuttanatte', on and after June 8th, from 'Calcutta' and from August 20th in the same year from 'Fort William' in Calcutta. Sutanuti was one of the three villages purchased for the East India Company in 1686, the other two being Calcutta and Govindpur. According to Major Ralf Smyth (1857), Chatanati occupied "the site of the present native town," i.e., the northern quarter of the city. Calcutta stood on what is now the European Commercial part; and Govindpur on the present site of Fort William. Sutanuti had a deity which was worshipped by the Hindoo wife of Job Charnock and her ancestors.

5. Captain Hamilton, who was travelling in India at the time that Charnock was living says that he was harsh in the extreme in his treatment of the natives, which may be ascribed to the sufferings he had undergone at their hands. He could not, however, have been very rigorous with all natives for the beautiful young Hindoo widow, whom he rescued as she was about to become Sati, and appropriated to himself, he appears to have tenderly loved whilst living and according to Captain Hamilton, deeply lamented when dead, sacrificing a fowl, it is said, at her tomb on every anniversary of her death as long as he lived, which would appear to show that she must have become a Moslem when she was cast out from the pale of Hindooism; and this is likely enough for the natives prefer to belong to any caste rather than to none. The incident alluded to is said to have occurred on the banks of the Hooghly about the year 1678.

6. There was some correspondence in the *Statesman* in October



1933 and a paper on "A Begum in Sussex" by Sir Evan Cotton in B. P. & P., Oct.-Dec. 1933 number, relating to this subject. With the help of a unique Persian manuscript I have now been able to identify this lady and trace the exact circumstances connected with her marriage.

7. Sir Evan Cotton points out that De Boigne merely bought a house for his Muslim wife there, but never visited her after his marriage with the Marquis's daughter.

8. While in London (January 21, 1800 to June 7, 1802) Mirza Abu Taleb made the acquaintance of "two or three Hindoostany ladies who from the affection they bore to their children had accompanied them to Europe". The "most distinguished of these" was Mrs. Ducarel, the wife of Gerard Gustavus Ducarel.

"It is generally reported that she was a young Hindoo widow of rank, whom Mr. Ducarel rescued from the funeral pile of her former husband and having converted her to christianity, he married her. She is very fair and so accomplished in all the English manners and language that I was some time in her company before I could be convinced she was a native of India. This lady introduced me to two or three of her children from sixteen to nineteen years of age, who had every appearance of Europeans."

Another "Hindoostany lady" visited was "Noor Begum who accompanied General De Boigne from India." She was dressed, we are told in the Eastern fashion and looked remarkably well. The Mirza's visit pleased her great and he was requested to take charge of a letter for her mother "who resides at Lucknow". He adds:

When General De Boigne thought proper to marry a young French woman, he made a settlement on the Begum and gave her the house in which she resides. She has two children, a boy and a girl, of fifteen and sixteen years of age who at the time of my visit were at school and always spent their holidays with her.

We have here the honorific title, Noor Begum, of the lady who under the name of Helena Bennett. (Halima Benoit) lived in Sussex for more than half a century and whose grave in the churchyard at Horsham has lately been discovered (Vol. XLVI, pp. 91-94). She died on January 4, 1854 at the age of 81; and was therefore a young woman of 28 when Mirza Abu Taleb visited her in 1801.

9. In several cantonment stations there may still be seen attached to what were originally the bungalows of military officers, the outhouse which had been built for the accommodation of an Indian wife or concubine. It is usually linked on to the main building by screening boundary walls. In palliation one sometimes finds the pleas put forward that concubinage was an expedient imposed by necessity; that the English officer dwelt more in camps than in settlements; that the army was perpetually on the move; that life was a series of thrilling adventures; and sudden death, the common expectation.

10. In 1833 when the Bill of that year was before the Houses of Parliament, many notable persons who had an intimate knowledge of India were nervous as to the wisdom of suppressing by legislation



slavery—an institution which from time immemorial had the sanctions of religion and usage. Among them was the Duke of Wellington, who thus expressed himself in the House of Lords: "I must recommend the striking of this clause (Clause 88) from the Bill. I know that in the hut of every Mussalman soldier in the Indian Army, there is a female slave, who accompanies him in all marches; and I would recommend to Your Lordships not to deal with this matter if you wish to retain your sovereignty in India."

11. I have attempted here to present a brief account of a tragic episode from the Maratha history—the romance of Bajeerao and Mastani—as revealed by the authentic historical records of the Peshwa period. The accounts, hitherto published of Mastani, the famous mistress of the illustrious Peshwa Bajeerao Ballal, are mostly based on imaginative and conjectural material, no attempt having been made so far to explore the mines of historical records throwing light on the incidents of her life. I have tried to glean from the available historical records and meagre though the light thrown by these on her life may be, it will help to understand and appreciate properly the role played by this lady in the life of one of the greatest personalities of the Maratha history.

12. According to Peshwanchi Bakhar (Sohani) Shahjatkhan was a sardar of the Delhi Emperor sent against Nizam.

13. *Ibid.*

14. Kavyetihas Sangraha, Patre, Yadi Vagaire, page 499.

15. An old Maratha Bakhar of 1836, quoted by Parasnis.

16. Pogson's Boondelas, page 108 (Published 1828).

17. Family accounts of the Peshwa Sardars by General Briggs, Resident of Satara. (1821). Quoted by Parasnis in Bharatwarsha Aitihasik Chandra, page 90.

18. Genealogical Table of the Peshwa Family including its Mohomedan Branch of Banda.

19. Nibandha Chandrica by Pandit Kalidas, published 1884.

20. Peshwa Daftar, Vol. 9, letter 36.

21. Peshwa Daftar, Vol. 42. Letter 16 and Vol. 43, Letter 51.

22. *Ibid.* Vol. 30 letter 651.

23. Pogson's Boondelas page, 108. Family accounts of Peshwa Sardars by General Briggs.

24. Pant-Pradhan Shakawali, page 6.

25. Peshwa Daftar, Vol. 18, letter 12.

26. Peshwa Daftar Vol. 9, letter 30.

27. Marathyanchnya Itihasachi Sadhance, Vol. 6 Purandare Rojanishi by Rajawade, page 30.

28. *Ibid.*

29. *Ibid.*

30. Aitihasik Charchya, Itihas Sangraha, pages 6, 8, 11.

31. *Ibid.*

32. *Ibid.*

33. Peshwa Daftar, Vol. 9, letter 35.

34. Peshwa Daftar, Vol. 9, letter 30,



35. *Ibid.*
36. *Ibid.*
37. Peshwa Daftar, Vol. 9, letter 31.
38. *Ibid.*
39. Peshwa Daftar, Vol. 30, letter 334.
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Ibid.*
42. Satara Papers, Vol. 2, letter 275. Aitihasik Charcha Itihas Sangraha, page 10.
43. Peshwa Daftar, Vol. 9, letter 32.
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Ibid.*
46. Aitihasik Charcha Itihas Sangraha, page 12 (Mastanicha Shewat).
47. *Ibid.*
48. *Ibid.*
49. *Ibid.*
50. *Ibid.*
51. *Ibid.*
52. *Ibid.*
53. Itihas Sangraha, Aitihasik Tipane.
54. Panta pradhan Shakawali page 7. Peshwa Daftar, Vol. 9, letter 37.
55. Peshwa Daftar, Vol. 9 letter 33.
56. Peshwa Daftar. Vol. 22, letter 146. Panta Pradhan Shakali, page 7.
57. Peshwa Daftar Vol.9, letter 33.
58. A place on the Travancore coast, the site of an old English Factory: properly said to be *Anju-tengu*. This name gives rise to the marvellous rhapsody of the once famous Abbe Raynal, regarding "Sterne's Eliza". —*Hobson-Jobson*.



## CHAPTER 5

# An Englishwoman in India Two and a half Centuries Ago

COLONEL BIDDULPH

On the 9th March, 1709, the *Loyall Bliss*, East Indiaman, Captain Hudson, left her anchorage in the Downs and sailed for Bengal. As passengers, she carried Captain Gerrard Cooke, his wife, a son and two daughters, together with a few soldiers. For many years Cooke had served the Company at Fort William, as Gunner, an office that included the discharge of many incongruous duties. After a stay in England, he was now returning to Bengal, as engineer, with the rank of captain. The *Loyall Bliss* was a clumsy sailer, and made slow progress; so that August had come before she left the Cape behind her. Contrary winds and bad weather still detained her, and kept her westward of her course. By the middle of September, the south-west monsoon, on which they depended to carry them up the bay, had ceased to blow, so—"our people being a great many Downe with the scurvy and our water being short, wee called Consultation of Officers it being too late to pretend to get bengall the season being come that the N.E. Trade wind being sett in and our people almost every man tainted with distemper," it was determined to make for Carwar and "endeavor to gett refresments there."

### Child girl marries old factory chief

On the 7th October, they came to anchor in the little bay



formed by the Carwar River. The next day, hearing of a French man-of-war being on the coast, they procured a pilot and anchored again under the guns of the Portuguese fort on the island of Angediva, where lay the bones of some three hundred of the first royal troops ever sent to India. Twenty-six soldiers were sent on shore, 'most of them not being able to stand.' The chief of the Company's factory at Carwar at that time was Mr. John Harvey, who entertained Captain Hudson and all the gentlemen and ladies on board 'in a splendid manner.' One may picture to one's self the pleasure with which they escaped for a time from the ship and its scurvy-stricken crew. To Mr. Harvey and the Company's officials they were welcome as bringing the latest news from England. They were able to tell of Marlborough's victory at Oudenarde, and the capture of Lille and Minorca, while Harvey was able to tell them of Captain Kidd's visit to Carwar twelve years before, and to show them where the freebooter had careened his ship. But Mr. John Harvey found other matter of interest in his visitors. There were few Englishwomen in India in those days, and the unexpected advent of a fresh young English girl aroused his susceptibilities to such an extent that he forgot to report to Bombay the arrival of the *Loyall Bliss*, for which, he, in due time, received a reprimand. He quickly made known to Captain Cooke that he had taken a very great liking to his eldest daughter, Mistress Catherine Cooke, 'a most beautiful lady, not exceeding thirteen or fourteen years of age.' Cooke was a poor man, and had left two more daughters in England; so, as Mr. Harvey 'proffered to make great Settlements provided the Father and Mother would consent to her marriage,' Mistress Catherine Cooke, 'to oblige her parents,' consented also. There was little time for delay, as the captain of the *Loyall Bliss* was impatient to be off. The Company's ship *Tankerville* was on the coast, bound southward, and it was desirable they should sail in company for mutual protection. So, on the 22nd October, the *Loyall Bliss* made sail for Bengal, where she safely arrived in due time, leaving behind the young bride at Carwar.

To the lookers-on the marriage was repugnant, and can hardly have been a happy one for the young girl, as Harvey was 'a deformed man and in years.' He had been long on the coast, and by diligent trading had acquired a little money;



but he had other things to think of besides his private trade, as we find recorded at the time that 'the Rajah of Carwar continues ill-natured.' By the end of 1710, he made up his mind to resign the Company's service, wind up his affairs, and go to England; so Mr. Robert Mence was appointed to succeed him at Carwar, and, in April, 1711, Harvey and his child-wife came to Bombay. But to wind up trading transactions of many years' standing was necessarily a long business, and there was no necessity for hurry, as no ship could leave for England till after the monsoon. As always happened in those days, his own accounts were mixed up with those of the Company, and would require laborious disentanglement. Before leaving Carwar, he had leased to the Company his trading grab, the *Salamander*, and had taken the precaution to pay himself out of the Company's treasure chest at Carwar. Before long, there was an order to the Carwar chief to recharge Mr. Harvey 402 Pagodas, 17 Jett, and 4 Pice he had charge to the Company for the use of the *Salamander*, the account having been liquidated in Bombay; from which it would appear that he had been paid twice for his ship. The accounts of those days must have been maddening affairs owing to the multiplicity of coinages. Pounds sterling, Pagodas, Ruppees, Fanams, Xeraphims, Laris, Juttals, Matts, Reis, Rials, Cruzadoes, Sequins, Pice, Budgerooks, and Dollars of different values were all brought into the official accounts. In 1718, the confusion was increased by a tin coinage called Deccanees.<sup>1</sup> The conversion of sums from one coinage to another, many of them of unstable value, must have been an ever lasting trouble.<sup>2</sup> In August we find Harvey writing to the Council to say that he had at Tellicherry a chest of pillar dollars weighing 289 lbs. 3 ozs. 10 dwts., which he requests may be paid into the Company's cash there, and in return a chest of dollars may be given him at Bombay.

### New acquaintances

His young wife doubtless assisted him in his complicated accounts, and gained some knowledge of local trade. It must have been a wonderful delight to her to escape from the dulness of Carwar and mix in the large society of Bombay, and she must have realized with sadness the mistake she had made



in marrying a deformed man old enough to be her grandfather, at the solicitation of her parents. She made, at this time, two acquaintances that were destined to have considerable influence on her future life. On the 5th August, the *Godolphin*, twenty-one days from Mocha, approached Bombay, but being unable to make the harbour before nightfall, anchored outside; a proceeding that would appear, even to a landsman, absolutely suicidal in the middle of the monsoon, but was probably due to fear of pirates.<sup>3</sup> That night heavy weather came on, the ship's cable parted, and the *Godolphin* became a total wreck at the foot of Malabar Hill. Apparently, all the Englishmen on board were saved, among them the second supercargo, a young man named Thomas Chown, who lost all his possessions. There was also in Bombay, at the time, a young factor, William Gyfford, who had come to India, six years before, as a writer, at the age of seventeen. We shall hear of both of them again.

In October, came news of the death of Mr. Robert Mence Carwar. 'Tho his time there was so small we find he had misapplied 1700 and odd pagodas to his own use,' the Bombay Council reported to the Directors in London. In his place was appointed Mr. Miles Fleetwood, who was then in Bombay awaiting a passage to the Persian Gulf where he had been appointed a factor. With him returned to Carwar, Harvey and his wife, to adjust some depending accounts with the country people there.

We get an account of Carwar thirty years before this, from Alexander Hamilton, which shows that there was plenty of sport near at hand for those who were inclined for it, and it is interesting to find that the Englishmen who now travel in search of big game had their predecessors in those days—

"This Country is so famous for hunting, that two Gentlemen of Distinction, viz: Mr. *Lembourg* of the House of *Lembourg* in *Germany*, and Mr. *Goring*, a Son of my Lord *Goring's* in *England*, went *incognito* in one of the *East India* Company's Ships, for *India*. They left Letters directed for their Relations, in the Hands of a Friend of theirs, to be delivered two or three Months after their Departure, so that Letters of Credit followed them by the next Year's Shipping, with Orders from the *East India* Company to the Chiefs of the



Factories, wherever they should happen to come, to treat them according to their Quality. They spent three Years at *Carwar*, viz : from Anno 1678 to 1681, then being tired with that Sort of Pleasure, they both took Passage on board a Compan'y Ship for *England*, but Mr. *Goring* died four days after the Ship's Departure from *Carwar*, and lies buried on the Island of *St. Mary*, about four Leagues from the Shore, off *Batacola*, and Mr. *Lembourg* returned safe to *England*".

#### Girl-wife becomes a widow and remarries

Four months after his return to *Carwar*, Harvey died, leaving his girl-wife a widow. She remained at *Carwar*, engaged in winding up the trading affairs of her late husband, and asserting her claim to his estate, which had been taken possession of by the Company's officials, according to custom. According to the practice of the day, every merchant and factor had private trading accounts which were mixed up with the Company's accounts, so that on retirement they were not allowed to leave the country till the Company's claims were settled. In case of death their estates were taken possession of for the same reason. Two months later, Mr. Thomas Chown, the late supercargo of the *Godolphin*, was sent down to *Carwar* as a factor, and, a few weeks after his arrival, he married the young widow. Application was now made to the Council at Bombay for the effects of her late husband to be made over to her, and orders were sent to *Carwar* for the late Mr. Harvey's effects to be sold, and one-third of the estate to be paid to Mrs. Chown, provided Harvey had died intestate. The *Carwar* factory chief replied that the effects had realized 13,146 rupees 1 fanam and 12 budgerooks; that Harvey had left a will dated the 8th April, 1708, and that therefore nothing had been paid to Mrs. Chown. It was necessary for Chown and his wife to go to Bombay and prosecute their claims in person. The short voyage was destined to be an eventful one.

On the 3rd November (1712), Chown and his wife left *Carwar* in the *Anne* ketch, having a cargo of pepper and wax on board, to urge their claim to the late Mr. Harvey's estate. The coast swarmed with pirate craft, among which those of *Conajee Angria* were the most numerous and the most formidable. It was usual, therefore, for every cargo of any value



to be convoyed by an armed vessel. To protect the *Anne*, Governor Aislabie's armed yacht had been sent down, and a small frigate, the *Defiance*,<sup>4</sup> was also with them. The day after leaving Carwar they were swooped down upon by four of Angria's ships, and a hot action ensued. The brunt of it fell on the Governor's yacht, which had both masts shot away and was forced to surrender. The ketch tried to escape back to Carwar, but was laid aboard by two grabs, and had to surrender when she had expended most of her ammunition. In the action, Chown had his arm torn off by a cannon-shot, and expired in his wife's arms. So again, in little more than three years from her first marriage, Mrs. Chown was left a widow when she could hardly have been eighteen. The captured vessels and the prisoners were carried off; the crews to Gheriah and the European prisoners to Colaba. To make matters worse for the poor widow, she was expecting the birth of an infant.

### Widow again

Great was the excitement in Bombay when the news of Mrs. Chown's capture arrived. The Governor was away at Surat, and all that could be done was to address Angria; so a letter was written to him 'in English and Gentues,' asking for the captives and all papers to be restored, and some medicine was sent for the wounded. Just at this time also news was received of the Indiaman *New George* having been taken by the French near Don Mascharenas.<sup>5</sup> Sir John Gayer, who was on board, finished his troubled career in the East by being killed in the action.

After keeping them a month in captivity, Angria sent back his prisoners, except the captains and mates and Mrs. Chown, whom he kept for ransom. In acknowledgment of kindness shown to the released prisoners by the Seedee, that chief was presented with a pair of Musquetoons, a fowling-piece, and five yards of 'embost' cloth. But in the Governor's absence the Council could do nothing about payment of ransom. When he returned, negotiations went on through the European prisoners in Colaba. Angria being sincerely anxious for peace with the English while he was in arms against his own chief, terms were arranged, and Lieutenant Mackintosh was despatched to Colaba with Rs. 30,000 as ransom for the



Europeans, and the sealed convention. On the 22nd February (1713), he returned, bringing with him Mrs. Chown and the other captives, the captured goods, and the *Anne* ketch, but the yacht was too badly damaged to put to sea. According to Downing, Mrs. Chown was in such a state that Mackintosh 'was obliged to wrap his clothes about her to cover her nakedness.' But her courage had never forsaken her; 'she most courageously withstood all Angria's base usage, and endured his insults beyond expectation.' Shortly afterwards she was delivered of a son. Out of her first husband's estate one thousand rupees were granted her for present necessities, with an allowance of one hundred xeraphims a month.

### Marries for the third time

Very shortly afterwards we find her being married for the third time, to young William Gyfford, with the Governor's approval. According to the statute law of Bombay, no marriage was binding, except it had the Governor's consent; Hamilton tells us how on one occasion a factor, Mr. Solomon Loyd, having married a young lady without the Governor's consent, Sir John Gayer dissolved the marriage, and married the lady again to his own son. In October, two years and a half after her first husband's death, seven thousand four hundred and ninety-two rupees, being one-third of his estate, were paid over to her. It is carefully recorded that neither of her deceased husbands had left wills, though the existence of Harvey's will had been very precisely recorded by the Council, fifteen months before. Young Gyfford, who was then twenty-five, appears to have been a favourite with the Governor, and had lately been given charge of the Bombay Market. Eighteen months after his marriage, we find William Gyfford appointed supercargo of the *Catherine*, trading to Mocha. The office was a most desirable one for a young factor. It afforded him opportunities for private trade at first hand, instead of through agents, that in the mind of an adventurous young man quite outbalanced the perils of the sea.

In spite of small salaries, a goodly appearance was made by the Company's servants in public. At the public table, where they sat in order of seniority, all dishes, plates, and drinking-cups were of pure silver or fine china. English,



Portuguese, and Indian cooks were employed, so that every taste might be suited. Before and after meals silver basins were taken round for each person to wash his hands. Arrack, Shiraz wine, and 'Pale punch,' a compound of brandy, rose-water, lime-juice, and sugar, were drunk, and, at times, we hear of Canary wine. In 1717, Boone abolished the public table, and diet money was given in its place. Boone reported to the Directors that, by the change, a saving of nearly Rs. 16,000 a year was effected, and the Company's servants better satisfied. On festival days the Governor would invite the whole factory to a picnic in some garden outside the city. On such an occasion, a procession was formed, headed by the Governor and his lady, in palanquins. Two large ensigns were carried before them, followed by a number of led horses in gorgeous trappings of velvet and silver. Following the Governor came the Captain of the Peons on horseback, with forty or fifty armed men on foot. Next followed the members of the Council, the merchants, factors, and writers, in order of seniority, in fine bullock coaches or riding on horses, all maintained at the Company's expense. At the Dewallee festival every servant of the Company, from the Governor to the youngest writer, received a 'peshcush' from the brokers and banias, which to the younger men were of much importance; as they depended on these gifts to procure their annual supply of clothes.

Of the country, away from the coast, they were profoundly ignorant. The far-off King of 'Dilly' was little more than a name to them, and they were more concerned in the doings of petty potentates with strange names, such as the Zamorin, the Zammelook, the Kempsant, and the Sow Rajah, who have long disappeared. They talked of the people as Gentoos, Moors, Mallwans, Sanganians, Gennims, Warrels, Coulis, Patanners, etc., and the number of political, racial, religious, and linguistic divisions presented to their view must have been especially puzzling. Owing to the numerous languages, necessary to carry on trade on the Malabar coast, they were forced to depend almost entirely on untrustworthy Portuguese interpreters. Their difficulties in this respect are dwelt on by Hamilton—

"One great Misfortune that attends us *European Travellers* in *India*, is, the Want of Knowledge of their Languages, and they being so numerous, that one intire Century would be too



short a Time to learn them all : I could not find one in Ten thousand that could speak intelligible *English*, tho' along the Sea coast the *Portuguese* have left a Vestige of their Language, tho' much corrupted, yet it is the Language that most *Europeans* learn first, to qualify them for a general Converse with one another, as well as with the different Inhabitants of *India*."

After two years' work, as supercargo, on different ships, Gyfford was sent down to Anjengo as chief of the factory. Anjengo was at that time one of the most important factories on the Malabar coast, though of comparatively recent establishment. It was first frequented by the Portuguese, who, after a time, were ousted by the Dutch. It belonged to the Rani of Attinga, who owned a small principality extending along sixty miles of coast. In 1688,<sup>6</sup> Rani Ashure invited the English to form a trading settlement in her dominions, and two were formed, at Vittoor (Returah) and Villanjuen (Brinjone). But for some reason, she became dissatisfied with the English, and the hostility of the Dutch, in spite of the alliance between the two countries in Europe, caused great trouble. In November 1693, John Brabourne was sent to Attinga, where, by his successful diplomacy, the sandy spite of Anjengo was granted to the English, as a site for a fort, together with the monopoly of the pepper trade of Attinga. Soon, the Dutch protests and intrigues aroused the Rani's suspicions. She ordered Brabourne to stop his building. Finding him deaf to her orders, she first tried to starve out the English by cutting off supplies, but as the sea was open, the land blockade proved ineffectual. She then sent an armed force against Brabourne, which was speedily put to flight, and terms of peace were arranged. The fort was completed, and a most flourishing trade in pepper and cotton cloth speedily grew up. Anjengo became the first port of call for outward-bound ships. The Anjengo fortification appeared so formidable to the Dutch, that they closed their factories at Cochin, Quilon, and Cannanore.<sup>7</sup> About 1700, Rani Ashure died, and the little principality fell into disorder. It was a tradition that only women should reign, and Ashure's successor was unable to make her authority felt. The Poolas, who governed the four districts into which the principality was divided, intrigued for power against each other, and before long the Rani became a puppet in the hands of Poola Venjamutta. In



1704, a new Governor, Sir Nicholas Waite, was appointed to Bombay. For some reason he left Brabourne without instructions or money for investment.<sup>8</sup> Their small salaries and their private trading seem to have made the Company's servants very independent. We constantly find them throwing up the service and going away, without waiting for permission. Brabourne went off to Madras, after delivering over the fort to Mr. Simon Cowse, who had long resided there, apparently as a private merchant, and who proved, as times went, a good servant to the Company. The Company's service in those days was full of intrigue and personal quarrels. The merchant second in rank at Anjengo, John Kyffin, intrigued against Cowse so successfully, that Cowse was deposed, and Kyffin was made chief of the settlement. He appears to have been a thoroughly unscrupulous man. To enrich himself in his private pepper trade 'he stuck at nothing.' He took part in the local intrigues of Attinga, from which his predecessors had held aloof, played into the hands of Poola Venjamutta, quarrelled with the other local officials and behaved with great violence whenever there was the slightest hitch in his trade. Kyffin's want of loyalty to the Company was still more clearly shown by his friendly dealings with their rivals, a proceeding that was strictly forbidden.

In June, 1717, Kyffin made known to the Council at Bombay his wish to retire, and William Gyfford was appointed to succeed him as soon as the monsoon would permit. So, in due course of time, Gyfford and his wife went to Anjengo ; but, in spite of his resignation, Kyffin stuck to his office, and evidently viewed Gyfford with unfriendly eyes. In the following April, intelligence reached the Council at Bombay that Kyffin had had dealings with the Ostenders, and had been 'very assisting' to them ; so, a peremptory order went down from Bombay, dismissing him from the Company's service, if the report of his assisting the Ostenders was true. If the report was not true, no change was to be made. A commission to Gyfford to assume the chiefship was sent at the same time. Interlopers and Ostenders, he was told, were not to receive even provisions or water. So Kyffin departed, and Gyfford reigned at Anjengo in his stead.



**Gyfford's folly**

But the follies of Kyffin had roused a feeling against the English that was not likely to be allayed by Gyfford, who exceeded Kyffin in dishonesty and imprudence. He threw himself into the pepper trade, using the Company's money for his own purposes, and joined hands with the Portuguese interpreter, Ignatio Malheiros, who appears to have been a consummate rogue. Before long, religious feeling was aroused by the interpreter obtaining possession of some pagoda land in a money-lending transaction. Gyfford also aroused resentment, by trying to cheat the native traders over the price of pepper, by showing fictitious entries in the factory books, and by the use of false weights. The only thing wanting for an explosion was the alienation of the Muhammedan section, which, before long, was produced by chance and by Gyfford's folly. It happened that some Muhammedan traders came to the fort to transact business with Cowse, who had resumed business as a private merchant : but he was not at leisure, so they went to the interpreter's house, to sit down and wait. While there, the interpreter's 'strumpet' threw some *hooli* powder on one of the merchants. Stung by the insult, the man drew his sword, wounded the woman, and would have killed her, if he and his companions had not been disarmed. Gyfford, when they were brought before him, allowed himself to be influenced by the interpreter, and ordered them to be turned out of the fort, after their swords had been insultingly broken over their heads. The people of Attinga flew to arms, and threatened the fort. For some months, there were constant skirmishes. The English had no difficulty in defeating all attacks, but, none the less, trade was brought to a stand-still ; so Mr. Walter Brown was sent down from Bombay to put matters straight. Poola Venjamutta, who had all the time kept himself in the background, was quite ready to help an accommodation, as open force had proved useless. Things having quieted down, Gyfford, 'flushed with the hopes of having Peace and Pepper,' devoted himself to trade. He had at this time a brigantine called the *Thomas*, commanded by his wife's brother, Thomas Cooke, doing his private trade along the coast. The year 1720 passed quietly. Force having proved unavailing, the Attinga people dissembled their anger, and waited for an opportunity to revenge themselves. So well was



the popular feeling against the English concealed, that Cowse, with his long experience and knowledge of the language, had no suspicions.

There had been an old custom, since the establishment of the factory, of giving presents yearly to the Rani, in the name of the Company ; but for some years the practice had fallen into abeyance. Gyfford, wishing to ingratiate himself with the authorities, resolved on reviving the custom, and to do so in the most ceremonious way, by going himself with the presents for seven years. Accordingly, on the 11th April, 1721, accompanied by all the merchants and factors, and taking all his best men, about one hundred and twenty in number, and the same number of coolies, Gyfford started for Attinga, four miles up the river. Here they were received by an enormous crowd of people, who gave them a friendly reception. The details of what followed are imperfectly recorded, and much is left to conjecture but Gyfford's foolish overconfidence is sufficiently apparent. In spite of their brave display, his men carried no ammunition. Poola Venjamutta was not to be seen. They were told he was drunk, and they must wait till he was fit to receive them. He was apparently playing a double part, but the blame for what followed was afterwards laid on his rival, Poola Cadamon Pillay. Cowse's suspicions were aroused, and he advised an immediate return to Anjengo, but Gyfford refused to take the advice. He is said to have struck Cowse, and to have threatened him with imprisonment. The Rani also sent a message, advising a return to Anjengo. It was getting late, and to extricate himself from the crowd, Gyfford allowed the whole party to be inveigled into a small enclosure. To show his goodwill to the crowd, he ordered his men to fire a salvo, and then he found that the ammunition carried by the coolies had been secured, and they were defenceless. In this hopeless position, he managed to entrust a letter addressed to the storekeeper at Anjengo, to the hands of a friendly native. It reached Anjengo at one o'clock next day, and ran as follows :—

"Captain Sewell. We are treacherously dealt with here, therefore keep a very good look out of any designs on you. Have a good look to your two Trankers.<sup>9</sup> We hope to be with you to-night. Take care and don't frighten the women ; we are in no great danger. Give the bearer a Chequeen."<sup>10</sup>



**Gyfford killed**

But none of the English were to see Anjengo again. That night, or the next morning, a sudden attack was made, the crowd surged in on the soldiers, overwhelmed them, and cut them to pieces. The principal English were seized and reserved for a more cruel death. In the confusion, Cowse, who was a favourite among the natives, managed to disguise himself, got through the crowd, and sought to reach Anjengo by a little frequented path. By bad luck he was overtaken by a Muhammedan merchant who owed him money. Cowse offered to acquit him of the debt, but to no purpose. He was necessarily killed, and thus the debt was settled. 'Stone dead hath no fellow,' as the chronicler of his death says. The rest of the English were tortured to death, Gyfford and the interpreter being reserved for the worst barbarities. Ignatio Malheiros was gradually dismembered, while Gyfford had his tongue torn out, was nailed to a log of wood, and sent floating down the river.

**Third time a widow escapes to Madras**

It is easy to picture to oneself the consternation in Anjengo, that 12th April, when, soon after midday, Gyfford's hasty note was received, and the same evening, when a score of wounded men (topasses) straggled in to confirm the worst fears; 'all miserably wounded, some with 12 or 13 cutts and arrows in their bodies to a lower number, but none without any.' Gyfford had taken away all the able men with him, leaving in the fort only 'the dregs,' old men, boys, and pensioners, less than forty in number. At their head were Robert Sewell, who describes himself as storekeeper, Captain and Adjutant by order of Governor Boone; Lieutenant Peter Laphorne, Ensign Thomas Davis, and Gunner Samuel Ince. The first three of them were absolutely useless, and Gunner Ince, whose name deserves to be remembered, was the only one of the four who rose to the situation. His first care was for the three English women, whose husbands had just been killed. By good fortune there happened to be in the road a small country ship that had brought a consignment of cowries from the Maldives. Mrs. Gyfford, for the third time a widow, Mrs. Cowse with four children, and Mrs. Burton with two, were hastily put on board, and sailed at once for Madras. No mention appears of Mrs. Gyfford having any



children with her, but she carried off the factory records and papers, and what money she could lay her hands on. She was no longer the confiding girl, who had given herself to Governor Harvey eleven years before. She had learned something of the world she lived in, and intended to take care of herself as well as she could. She even tried to carry off Peter Lapthorne with her, but Sewell intervened and prevented it. So giving him hasty directions to act as her agent, she passed through the dangerous Anjengo surf and got on board. A letter to her from Lapthorne, written a few weeks later, relates that the only property he could find belonging to her were 'two wiggs and a bolster and some opium' in the warehouse.

Having got rid of the white women, Sewell and his companions set to work to hold the fort against the attack that was inevitable. From the old records we get an idea of what the fort was like. As designed by Brabourne, it covered a square of about sixty yards each way, but this did not include the two Trankers, palisaded out-works, alluded to in Gyfford's note. Ten years before, the attention of the Council at Bombay had been drawn to the bad condition of the—

"Fort house, being no more then timber covered with palm leaves (cajanns) so very dangerous taking fire," and the chief of the factory was ordered to build "a small compact house of brick with a Hall, and conveniencys for half a dozen Company's servants. And being advised that for want of a necessary house in the Fort, they keep the Fort gate open all night for the guard going out and in, which irregularity may prove of so pernicious consequence as the loss of that garrison, especially in a country where they are surrounded with such treacherous people as the Natives and the Dutch," it was ordered that a "necessary house over the Fort walls" should be built, and the gates kept locked after 8 o'clock at night.

How far these orders had been carried out does not appear but the Company's goods were still kept in a warehouse outside the walls: some of the Company's servants also had houses outside, and the palm-leaf roofs were still there. For garrison they only had about thirty-five boys and pensioners, 'whereof not twenty fit to hold a firelock,' and, for want of a sufficient garrison, it was necessary to withdraw from the Trankers, which were thought to be so important for the safety of the



place. Desperate as was the outlook, Gunner Ince exerted himself like a man, animating everybody by his example. By his exertions, seven hundred bags of rice, with salt fish for a month, and the Company's treasure were got in from the warehouse, and an urgent appeal was sent to Calicut. The surgeon had been killed with Gyfford; they had no smith or carpenter or tools, except a few hatchets, and the Attinga people swarming into Anjengo burned and plundered the settlement, forcing a crowd of women and children to take refuge in the small fort. Though no concerted attack was made at first, the assailants tried with fire arrows to set fire to the palm-leaf roofs, which had to be dismantled; and all through the siege, which lasted six months, the sufferings of the garrison were increased by the burning rays of a tropical sun or the torrential rains of the monsoon.

#### Plundering the Company's warehouse

On the 25th April, they were cheered by the arrival of two small English ships from Cochin, where the intelligence of the disaster had reached; and received a small reinforcement of seven men with a consignment of provisions. A message of condolence also had come from the Rajah of Quilon, who offered to receive the women and children, so one hundred and fifty native women and children, widows and orphans of the slain, were sent off. On the 1st May, an ensign and fifty-one men, collected by Mr. Adams from Calicut and Tellicherry, joined the garrison, and gave some relief from the constant sentry duty that was necessary. The enemy, meanwhile, had contented themselves with harassing the garrison by firing long shots at them; but it was rumoured that the Rajah of Travancore was sending troops, and then they would have to sustain a serious attack. Gunner Ince, on whom the whole weight of the defence rested, let it be known that in the last extremity he would blow up the magazine. It is cheering to find that there was at least one man who was prepared to do his duty. Sewell and Lapthorne got drunk, and joined with the warehouseman, a Portuguese named Rodriguez, in plundering the Company's warehouse and sending goods away to Quilon; the soldiers followed the example, and plundered the rooms inside the fort, while the late interpreter's family were allowed to send away, to Quilon,



effects to the value of one hundred thousand fanams, though it was known that the Company had a claim on him for over two-thirds of the amount, an account of money advanced to him. Davis was dying of a lingering illness, to which he succumbed in the beginning of July.

### **Vigorous attack and blockade**

On the 24th June, a vigorous attack was made on the fort from three sides at once. On one side the enemy had thrown up an entrenchment, and on the river side they had effect a lodgment in Cowse's house, a substantial building close to the wall of the fort. This would have soon made the fort untenable, so a small party was sent to dislodge the occupants. At first they were repulsed, but a second attempt was successful. Marching up to the windows, 'where they were as thick as bees,' they threw hand grenades into the house, which was hurriedly evacuated; numbers of the enemy leaping into the river, where some of them were drowned. Ince then bombarded them out of the entrenchment, and the attack came to an end. Several of the garrison were wounded, but none killed; but what chiefly mortified them was that the arms of the men slain with Gyfford were used against them. After this the land blockade lingered on, but no very serious attack seems to have been made. A second reinforcement of thirty men was sent down by Adams from Calicut, and the Rani and Poola Venjamutta sent 'refreshments,' and promised that the attacks of their rebellious subjects should cease. The Rani also wrote to the Madras Council, and sent a deputation of one hundred Brahmins to Tellicherry, to express her horror of the barbarities committed by her people, and her willingness to join the Company's forces in punishing the guilty.

### **Dishonest dealings**

Intelligence of the disaster at Anjengo did not reach Bombay till the beginning of July. The monsoon was in full force, and no assistance could be sent till it was over. Men and supplies were gathered in from Carwar and Surat, and, on the 17th October, Mr. Midford, with three hundred men, reached Anjengo. His report on the state of affairs he found there makes it a matter of surprise that the place had not fallen.



The safety of the fort had been entirely due to Gunner Ince. Sewell's behaviour was that of a fool or a madman. Together with Laphorne, he had set the example of plundering the Company, and their men had done as much damage as the enemy. Sewell, as storekeeper, had no books, and said he never had kept any. Laphorne had retained two months' pay, due to the men killed with Gyfford, and asserted his right to it. Much of the Company's treasure was unaccounted for, and Mrs. Gyfford had carried off the books. Midford sent Sewell and Laphorne under arrest to Bombay, where they were let off with a scolding, and proceeded to restore order. The Rani and Venjamutta were friendly, but told him he must take his own vengeance on the Nairs for their inhuman action. So he commenced a series of raids into the surrounding country, which reduced it to some sort of subjection. Soon there came an order for most of his men to be sent back to Bombay, where warlike measures against Angria were on foot. A cessation of arms was patched up, and Midford installed himself as chief.

He proved to be no honester than his predecessors. He monopolized the pepper trade on his own private account, making himself advances out of the Company's treasury. In less than a year he was dead, but before his death Alexander Orme,<sup>11</sup> then a private merchant on the coast, was sent to Anjengo as chief of the factory, at the special request of the Rani. Before long, Orme had to report to the Council that there were due to the Company, from Gyfford's estate, 559,421 fanams, and that 140,260 gold fanams had disappeared during Midford's chiefship which could not be accounted for. Midford had also drawn pay for twenty European soldiers who did not exist. The Council ascribed Midford's misdeeds to his 'unaccountable stupidity,' and the Directors answered that 'the charges against Mr. Midford are very grievous ones.'

In September, 1722, the Council received from Orme a copy of the treaty he had made with the Rani. The following were the chief provisions. The ringleaders in the attack on Gyfford were to be punished and their estate confiscated; all Christians living between Edawa and Brinjone were to be brought under the Company's protection; the Rani was to reimburse the Company for all expenses caused by the attack



on Anjengo; the Company was to have exclusive right to the pepper trade, and were empowered to build factories in the Rani's dominions wherever they pleased; the Rani was to return all arms taken in the late outbreak, and to furnish timber to rebuild the church that had been burned. The treaty was guaranteed by the Rani's brother, the Rajah of Chinganna. By the Directors it was received with mixed feelings.

"Last years Letters took some notice about the Affair at Anjengo, We had not then the Account of the Treaty Mr. Orme made with the Queen of Attinga and King of Chinganatta, We are sorry to find it included in the Treaty, That We must supply Souldiers to carry on the War against her rebellious Subjects for which she is to pay the Charge, and in the Interim to pawn Lands for answering principal and interest, because it will certainly involve us in a trouble if We succeed, and more if We dont, add to this, the variable temper and poverty of those people may incline them to refuse to refund, and in time they may redemand and force back their Lands, If the Articles are fully comply'd with they seem to be for the Companys benefit, But We fear we shall have the least Share of it, To what purpose is her Grant to Us of all the Pepper in her Countrey, If Our unfaithful people there get all for themselves and none for Us, as you Charge Mr. Midford with doing, We dont want an Extent of Lands, if We could but (obtain) pepper cheap and sufficient, And what benefit will it be to Us, to have the liberty of building Factorys, which in Event is only a Liberty to lavish away Our Money, and turning Quick Stock into dead, unless you could be morally certain it would be worth while to get a small residence in the King of Chinganatta Countrey, where it is said the Dutch make great Investments of Piece Goods cheaper and better, than they used to do at Negapatam, and therefore have deserted it, We consider further, if such Goods as are proper for our Europe Market were procurable, how comes it We have had none hitherto, It is true We have had Cloth from Anjengo good of the Sorts, but Invoiced so dear that We forbad sending more unless to be purchas'd at the prices We limited, since then We have heard no more about it, But we are told it is Traded in to Bombay to some profit, What profit will the putting the Christians between Edawa and Brinjone



under Our Jurisdiction yield to Us, and what Security can you have that the King of Chenganattys Guaranteeship will answer and give full satisfaction, These are what appear to Us worthy your serious and deliberate consideration to be well thought of before you come to a determination What Orders to give, We find by your Consultation in January 1722/23 you had sent down Treasure to Anjengo, to enable the chief to levy Souldiers to revenge the Murder of the English, since you could not spare Forces which as there exprest is absolutely necessary, for else the Natives will have but contemptible thoughts of the English, who will then loose their Esteem, had ever found a benefit by their Esteem, something might be said for it, But in the present Case We fear We shall buy Our Esteem at too dear a Rate, We should be extreemly glad to be mistaken and to find in effect what your 120th Paragraph says in words, that you hope to make it a Valuable Settlement."<sup>12</sup>

#### Unfortunate widow

We left Mrs. Gyfford flying from Anjengo in a small country ship, with two other English women and six children. The misery that the three poor widows must have endured for a month, crowded into a small country boat, without preparation or ordinary comforts, at the hottest time of the year, must have been extreme. On the 17th May, the fugitives landed at Madras. The Council there granted them a compassionate allowance, of which Mrs. Gyfford refused to avail herself. After a time she made her way to Calcutta and joined her father's family, leaving, with an agent in Madras, the Anjengo factory books, which, after repeated demands, were surrendered to the Madras Council. From Madras to Calcutta she was pursued by the demands of the Bombay Council. The books had been restored at Madras, and the Bengal Government extracted Rs. 7312 from her; but, in reply to further demands, she would only answer that she was 'an unfortunate widow, struggling with adversity, whose husband had met his death serving our Honourable Masters,' and that it was shameful to demand money from her, when she herself was owed large sums by the Company.<sup>13</sup> She could only refer them to her agents at Madras and Anjengo. Still, she was in a considerable dilemma, as she could not get out



of the country without a full settlement of accounts, and, if resistance was carried too far, her father might be made to suffer.

### Secures protection of Commodore Matthews

At this juncture an unexpected way of escape presented itself. Twelve months before this, Commodore Matthews had arrived in Bombay with a squadron of the Royal Navy for the suppression of piracy.<sup>14</sup> But Matthews was more bent on enriching himself by trade than on harrying pirates; and, as his own trading was inimical to the Company's interest and certain to set the Company's servants against him, he had from the first assumed a position of hostility to the Company. Every opportunity was seized of damaging the Company's interests and lowering the Company's authority. All who were in the Company's bad books found a patron and protector in Matthews; so, when in September, 1722, the flagship appeared in the Hooghly, Mrs. Gyfford was quick to grasp the opportunity, that presented itself, of bidding defiance to her pursuers. She at once opened communication with Matthews, and besought his protection. She was an unfortunate widow who had lost three husbands by violent deaths in the Company's service, and, now that she was unprotected, the Company was trying to wring from her the little money she had brought away from Anjengo, while she herself had large claims against the Company. This was quite enough for Matthews. Here was a young and pretty woman with a good sum of money, shamefully persecuted by the Company, to which he felt nothing but hostility. At one stroke he could gratify his dislike of the Company and succour a badly treated young woman, whose hard fate should arouse sympathy in every generous mind; so the Bengal Council were told that Mrs. Gyfford was now under the protection of the Crown, and was not to be molested.

In the hope of securing some portion of the money due to the Company, the Council attached the brigantine *Thomas*, commanded by Mrs. Gyfford's brother. A letter was at once forthcoming from Matthews to say that he had purchased Mrs. Gyfford's interest in the vessel. Finding themselves thus forestalled, the Council begged Matthews not to take



her away from Calcutta till she had furnished security for the Company's claim of Rs. 50,000. Matthews replied that he should take her to Bombay, where she would answer anything that might be alleged against her. As soon as he had completed his trading in Bengal, Mrs. Gyfford, with her effects, embarked on board the *Lyon*, and so returned to Bombay. There, in January, 1723, we find her living under Matthews' roof, much to the wrath of the Council and the scandal of her former acquaintances. By this time, the Council had received from Anjengo more precise details as to what was due to the Company from Gyfford's estate. All the cowries, pepper, and cloth that were said to belong to Gyfford had been bought with the Company's money, and the Company's claim against his estate was nearly £9000. A stringent order was sent to Mrs. Gyfford, forbidding her to leave Bombay till the claim was settled. Matthews at once put her on board the *Lyon* again, and there she remained; not venturing to set foot on shore, lest the Council should lay hands on her.

### Returns to England

By the end of the year, Matthews was ready to return to England. Intent to the last on trade, he touched at Carwar, Tellicherry, and St. David's, and, in Mrs. Gyfford's interests, a visit was also paid to Anjengo, to try and recover some of the property she claimed to have left there. She was not going to be put off with Laphorne's 'two wiggs and a bolster.' In July (1724) the *Lyon* reached Portsmouths, and was put out of commission.

### Ends in prolonged litigation

At first the Directors appear to have paid little attention to Mrs. Gyfford, perhaps not thinking her worth powder and shot. Their principal anger was directed against Matthews, against whom they obtained a decree in the Court of Chancery for unlawful trading. But Mrs. Gyfford would not keep silence. Perhaps she really believed in the justice of her claims. She bombarded the Directors with petitions, till at last, two years after her arrival in England, they tardily awoke to the fact that they themselves had substantial claims against her. They offered to submit the claims to arbitration, to which Mrs. Gyfford consented; but as she still refrained from coming to



close quarters, they filed a suit against her in the Court of Chancery, nearly four years after her arrival in England. Mrs. Gyfford promptly replied with a counter-suit, in which, among other things, she claimed £10,000 for presents taken by Gyfford to the Rani of Attinga on that fatal 11th April, seven years before. Four years later, she was still deep in litigation, having quarrelled with her agent, Peter Laphorne, among others. It is to be hoped for her sake, that Chancery suits were cheaper than they are now. Here we may say good-bye to her. For those who are curious in such matters, a search among the Chancery records will probably reveal the result, but it is improbable that the Company reaped any benefit from their action. And so she passes from the scene, a curious example of the vicissitudes to which Englishwomen in India were exposed, two and a half centuries ago.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. They were issued at the rate of sixty-five for a rupee; before long, their value was reduced to seventy-two for a rupee, at which price they were much in request, and the Governor reported that he expected to coin sixteen tons of them yearly.
2. In October, 1713, the Bombay Council decided that the Xeraphims, being much debased with copper and other alloy, their recognized value should in future be half a rupee, or two Laris and forty reis. The Xeraphim was a Goa coin, originally worth less than one and sixpence. The name, according to Yule, was a corruption of the Arabic *ashrafi*.
3. The year before, the *Godolphin* had escaped from an Angrian fleet, after a two days' encounter within sight of Bombay.
4. The records are silent as to the *Defiance*, but it is mentioned by Downing, who says that, instead of doing his duty, the captain made the best of his way to Bombay. The story seems to be borne out by a faded letter from the captain to the Directors, appealing against dismissal from the service.
5. The name is now given to the group of islands to which Bourbon and Mauritius belong. At that time it generally applied to Bourbon, and especially to St. Paul's Bay, which was a favourite place of call for ships to water at.
6. According to some accounts, the first settlement was a few years earlier, but the dates of the early travellers are very unreliable. Hamilton says that a present was sent in 1685 to the Queen: "A beautiful young English gentleman had the honour to present it to her black Majesty; and as soon as the Queen saw him, she fell in love with him."



and next day made proposals of marriage to him, but he modestly refused so great an honour. However, to please her Majesty, he stayed at court a month or two. When he left her court she made him some presents."

7. Bruce.

8. This is the reason given by Bruce for Brabourne leaving Anjengo, but the death of Brabourne's wife, in 1704, probably had a good deal to do with his leaving the place. Her tomb still exists.

9. Tranqueira (Port.), a palisade.

10. Meaning sequin : the origin of the modern Anglo-Indianism, 'chick.'

11. The father of Robert Orme, the historian, who was born at Anjengo.

12. Letter from Court of Directors to Bombay, 25th March, 1724.

13. In those days private trade was allowed, commissions were given on all contracts and purchases. Government servants were permitted to take contracts, while there were other sources of profit, licit and illicit.

14. In 1722 the Bombay Marine made a joint expedition with the Portuguese, the latter providing the land forces, against Alibeg, the marine force consisting of 3 ships under Commodore Mathews. Clement Dowing, a Lieutenant then in the service of the Bombay Marine, writes that the expedition failed due to the cowardice and treachery of Portuguese with many English officers and men killed or wounded. He adds further that after the failure of the attack, "The Commodore came on shore in violent rage, flew at the Portuguese General and thrust his cane in his mouth, and treated the Viceroy not much better."

—H.S. Bhatia *Military History of British India (1907-1947)*.



## CHAPTER 6

# Some Literary European Ladies

DOUGLAS DIWAS

In view of the fact that before the opening of the Red Sea route India was to a large extent a *terra incognita* to the people of the British Isles, and that English women in India had leisure almost without limit, it is surprising that so few of these have written books on India. The explanation is doubtless that in pre-Victorian days it was not the fashion for women to write books, and the majority of ladies were not sufficiently well educated to do so. It can scarcely be said that any of the works of those ladies who wrote about India is of outstanding merit, but, with the exception of one or two of the earliest efforts, all of them are well written, and most of them are of considerable value to the student of the times, because women naturally pay more attention to the details of domestic life than men do. But for these women writers our knowledge of life in the days of the Company would not be nearly so full as it is.

It is scarcely necessary to state that the writings of these literary ladies mostly took the form of journals or letters. In those days most women kept diaries, and the art of letter-writing had not been allowed to fall into decay.

### First book on India

Mrs. Kindersley's *Book of Travels* is perhaps the first book on India ever written by a woman. It was published in 1770, and is now a rare and valuable volume.<sup>1</sup> It does not disappoint



whether regarded from the literary or the utilitarian standpoint. Mrs. Kindersley came out to India with her husband, who was a military man. She went so far up country as Allahabad—at that time an outpost of the Empire—and stayed there for seven months. Some ten years after Mrs. Kindersley's volume, *Hartly House, Calcutta*, and Mrs. Fay's *Letters* appeared. These two books, together with the *Memoirs of Asiaticus*, furnish us with very detailed accounts of life in Calcutta as it was at the time of Warren Hastings. All three have been republished in recent years and are easily obtainable.

### Most vivacious style

*Hartly House, Calcutta*, purports to be a series of letters written to a girl friend in England by a young lady who came out to Calcutta with her father in 1783. There is intrinsic evidence to show that these so-called letters were never written as such, and that they are not the work of a woman. The writer signs herself at the foot of her letters variously Sofia Goldborne, Goldborn, and Goldsborne. There are some chronological inexactitudes in the letters which show that some at any rate, were not written at the time at which they purport to be. Although the phraseology is often rugged and occasionally positively ungrammatical, the book is written in a most vivacious style. These features might be looked for in a book written by a lively young girl. On the other hand, the book contains many passages of such a nature that finds it impossible to believe that they emanate from the pen of a girl born in the middle of the eighteenth century. Take, for example, the following: "I have been at church, my dear girl, in my new palanquin (the mode of genteel conveyance) where *all* ladies are approached, by sanction of ancient custom, by all gentlemen indiscriminately, known or unknown, with offers of their hands to conduct them to their seat. Accordingly those gentlemen who wish to change their condition (which between ourselves are chiefly old fellows, for the young fellows either choose country-born ladies for wealth, or, having left their hearts behind them, enrich themselves in order to be united to their favourite Dulcineas in their native land), on hearing of a ship's arrival, make a point of repairing to this holy dome and eagerly tender their services to the fair strangers, who, if this stolen view



happens to captivate, often, without undergoing the ceremony of a formal introduction, receive matrimonial overtures, becoming brides in the utmost splendour, have their rank simultaneously established and are visited and paid every honour to which the consequence of their husbands entitles them. But not so your friend; for, having accompanied my father to India, no overtures of that nature will be attempted previous to an acquaintance with him . . . nor did any gentleman break in upon the circle of my intimates on this first public exhibition of my person, though every male creature in Calcutta, entitled to that privilege, led Mr. and Mrs. Hartly to expect an early visit from them."

This, it is submitted, is not a letter written by a young girl who has not been a week in India. The writer makes no attempt to describe so curious a conveyance as the palanquin and displays an intimate knowledge of Calcutta society. For these reasons the *Hartly House* should not be numbered among the productions of women and so should not find a place in this article, but, as Busteed and others seem to accept the feminine authorship of the book, it has been mentioned.

#### A faithful account

The authorship of Mrs. Fay's *Letters* is not in doubt, Mrs. Fay was the wife of an English barrister who went out to India in 1780 to practise in Calcutta. He seems to have been rather a wastrel. Many adventures befell him and his wife on their way out. The writing of Mrs. Fay displays not a little humour, and her book, although often faulty in the matter of grammatical construction, is well worth perusal as a faithful account of social life in Calcutta when Warren Hastings was Governor-General.

Taking the Bengal ladies first, Mrs. Sherwood comes next in chronological order. She arrived in India in the early years of the nineteenth century. Her *Stories from the Church Catechism* was first published about the year 1817. This edition is very rare; the book was republished in 1873. It is, to quote the authors of *Hobson Jobson*, "almost unique as giving some view of the life of non-commissioned ranks of a British regiment in India."

Mrs. Sherwood had a ready pen, and wrote a large number



of books, chiefly for children. Owing to the death of several of her children, her autobiography, which appeared in 1857, affords rather depressing reading.

Lady Nugent and Mrs. Fenton should perhaps be numbered among the literary ladies who visited India in the days of the Company.

Both these women kept journals, which, although not written for publication, appeared in book form some time after the death of their writers. Maria, Lady Nugent was the wife of Sir George Nugent, Bart., who went to India in 1811 as Commander-in-Chief, and remained there till 1815.

Lady Nugent's Journal does not pretend to be a literary production. The editor evidently was not acquainted with India. Throughout the book the word "Tonjon" is spelt "Toujou"—evidently Lady Nugent wrote her "n's." like "u's." Her book, however, gives interesting accounts of life on board an East Indiaman, of Calcutta gossip in 1814 and 1815, and of life in India viewed from an angle different from that of most writers. The Journal was published in two volumes in 1839.

Mrs. Fenton came to India in 1826 and formed a very poor opinion of English society here. Writing of Dinapore in 1827 she says: "My greatest grief is that I must go out and visit among these censorious people; it is really quite frightful the party spirit and illiberality here. I am told such things as are hardly credible; character is martyred without mercy, charity only a name, and the transactions of private life exaggerated and misrepresented. It does surprise me how the mind can become warped in this way, or what the structure of that mind can be that has pleasure only in the affairs of others and rejects all the resources of taste and knowledge and self-improvement."

#### Anglo-Indian classic

Mrs. Parks came out to India in 1822 as the wife of an Indian Civilian going out to India to join the Company's service. She resided in the country for more than twenty years, spending the greater part of that period at Allahabad and Cawnpore. During the whole of her stay in India she kept a Journal. Upon this is based her *Wanderings of a Pilgrim in Search of the Picturesque*. This consists of two bulky volumes and was published in 1850. Fanny Parks was of an inquiring turn of mind



and never lost an opportunity of acquiring information; in quest of variety she made a trip up the Ganges in her pinnace *Seagull*, unaccompanied by her husband. In 1838 she visited Mussoorie. Her book is an Anglo-Indian classic. It contains a great deal more than notes on current events and descriptions of the social life of the English in India. In it there are chapters dealing with Thuggee and the Hindu and Mohammedan religions. She discourses on such multifarious subjects as the Gardener family, life in the Zenana, and the useful plants of India. Her well-written volumes are the work of a cultural lady, having a cheerful disposition and a fund of humour. Mrs. Parks has no literary mannerisms, and is almost unique among lady writers in that she does not gird at Anglo-Indian society. Every one who reads her book is captivated by it. It is illustrated, and some of the pictures are coloured, but most of them are not up to the standard of the text. The edition appears to have been a small one, and the book now costs anything over Rs. 100. The reprinting of it should prove a profitable speculation to a publisher.

#### Editor of a newspaper

Of the English women who have sojourned in India, Miss Emma Roberts is one of the most noteworthy. She lived at a time when women did not go to university and did not dream of competing with men in the various learned professions. Nevertheless, she successfully edited a newspaper on each of the two occasions on which she visited India. She was the daughter of Captain Roberts, who entered the Russian army and fought against the Turks on several occasions. He afterwards joined the English army, and died, when a captain, leaving a widow, one son and two daughters. The son entered the army and died young. The elder daughter married Captain McNaghten, of the 61st Bengal Native Infantry; the younger daughter, Emma, died a spinster. Miss Roberts was not a Daisy Ashford. As a child she seems to have written nothing, and it was not until she was nearing middle age that her literary bent displayed itself.

#### Writer, poet and editor

She was born in 1794, and her first book was published in 1827. This is entitled *Memoirs of the Rival Houses of York and*



*Lancaster, or the White and Red Roses.* This work was the result of much laborious research at the British Museum. It is written in pleasing style, but threw no new light on the events of the time, and was not a success. Miss Roberts is an essayist rather than a historian. Shortly after the publication of this book Mrs. Roberts died and Emma's sister married. In 1828 Miss Roberts went with the McNaghtens to India in the *Sir David Scott*. She accompanied the McNaghtens in a budgerow up the Ganges, and then spent about two years in the Upper Provinces, staying at Agra, Etawah, and Cawnpore. She was at the latter place when the theatre<sup>2</sup> was opened. She wrote the prologue, which was read at the opening entertainment, in which she alluded to the designer of the theatre, Captain Burt, of the Bengal Engineers, as a youth of retiring disposition. Burt later in one of his books denies the imputation, and pokes fun at Miss Roberts. While at Cawnpore Miss Roberts brought out a little volume of poetry entitled *Oriental Scenes*. The book is dedicated to Miss L. Landor, with whom Miss Roberts was intimate. The poems are not without merit, and the book was republished in England in 1832. Meanwhile, Mrs. McNaghten died, and Miss Roberts migrated to Calcutta, where she became the editor of the *Oriental Observer*. She also contributed a number of articles to the *Asiatic Journal*. In 1835 a selection of these essays was republished in book form under the title *Scenes and Characteristics of Hindustan*. This is Miss Robert's best-known work, and the fact that, at a time when but little attention was paid in England to things Indian, the book ran into a second edition is evidence of its merit. This book, like Mrs. Parks' *Wanderings of a Pilgrim in Search of the Picturesque*, and Sleeman's *Rambles and Recollections of an Indian Official*, has become a classic. It contains a vivid and spirited description of English society in India. It is true to life, and is not written in satirical vein. Its chief fault is that the local colour in it is put on a little too thickly. In places she exaggerates in an almost unconscionable manner. Take the following passage: "Gentlemen, after having been put to the expense attendant upon giving a ball, are sometimes compelled to divert themselves in the best manner they can devise without the assistance of their expected partners, all of whom, in consequence perhaps of some trivial pique, have sent excuses at the last hour. The



supper under the circumstances forms the only consolation, and the fair absentees are doubtless remembered in the libations which ensue. Ladies have also been known to retreat *en masse* from a dinner party, to be succeeded by dancing, being offended by the smell of cheroots emanating from a neighbouring apartment. The consternation of a host upon seeing a drawing-room deserted and the whole of the fair *cortege*—palkees, taunjohns, chariots, etc. in full retreat from the compound—may be imagined; the beloved cheroots, however, remained to reconcile the beaux to their loneliness—and it is much to be feared that in nine cases out of ten the lady will have been voluntarily sacrificed to the cigar. This highly esteemed preparation of tobacco has nearly superseded the use of the far more elegant hooka; it is not at present tolerated in female society."

### Cheroot-smoking

This conveys a totally false idea of social life in India. Such an incident may have happened once, but it was certainly not a common occurrence. The assertion that cheroot-smoking was not then tolerated in female society is diametrically opposed to the statement of Mrs. Fenton that dinner at Calcutta terminated in cheroot-smoking by every one but herself. From this it is evident that even ladies smoked cheroots.

The above quotation, if it illustrates her proneness to exaggerate, shows equally that Miss Roberts was a keen observer and possessed a happy knack of setting forth in words her impressions. A contemporary reviewer wrote of her: "Nothing can be more minute and faithful than her pictures of external life and manners. She does not, indeed, go much beneath the surface, nor does she take profound or general views of human nature, but we can mention no traveller who has thrown upon the printed page such true and vivid representations of all that strikes the eye of a stranger."

### A journalist

Like Lady Nugent, Miss Katherine Read, the artist, and other women who came to India in middle age, Miss Roberts found the climate of India very trying. She accordingly left India in 1832. In England she worked as a journalist. She also published a biographical sketch of Mrs. Maclean (formerly



Miss Landon). In 1838 and 1839 she contributed a series of articles to the *Oriental Herald*—a monthly journal published in England. One series of these articles, that entitled "The East Indian Voyager," was subsequently published in book form. In this work Miss Roberts goes into great detail and gives practical advice to all classes of travellers, cadets, members of the Company's Civil Service, chaplains and doctors. She tells each class the articles they require for their outfit, what they should buy in England and what in India, how to select a cabin, how to keep well during the voyage, what their prospects are in India, the cost of living and the number and description of servants they require. Miss Roberts, it will be noticed, did not hesitate to tell doctors how to preserve their health on the voyage. She went even farther, in that she gave officers advice as to their behaviour when sitting on a Court Martial. She felt that this needed some apology; this she gives; she lived for eight months in a house at which Courts Martial were frequently held. If "a capacity for taking infinite pains" be a true definition of genius, then Miss Roberts possessed much of this quality. In cases where she herself was not fully conversant with a subject, she did not hesitate to pick the brains of those who were. Eventually the lure of the East proved too strong for Miss Roberts to withstand. After remaining for nearly seven years in England she determined to pay India a second visit. Knowing that the climate of the country did not suit her, she determined to limit the period of her visit to one year, but she was not destined to live through this. She decided to travel by the newly opened route via the Red Sea. Before leaving England she arranged with the *Asiatic Journal* to write an account of her voyage out and a descriptive account of Bombay. She fulfilled her engagement. The account she wrote is most spirited, and is certainly as good as any of her earlier work. This was published in book form in 1840 under the title *A Journey through France and Egypt to Bombay* in 1839. She left England in September, 1839, and reached Bombay in November. At Bombay she stayed for a time at Parel with the Governor, Sir James Carnac. Almost immediately on her arrival at Bombay she undertook the editorship of a newly established weekly paper, the *Bombay United Service Gazette*. This work was not sufficient to keep her occupied, and she determined to write a statistical book on Western



India. Official records were placed at her disposal and she hoped to have amassed sufficient material before leaving India in October. In April, 1840, while on a visit to Colonel Ovens, the Resident at Sattara, Miss Roberts contracted an illness from which she never recovered. She died at Poona on the 17th September, 1840.

Mention must be made of Mrs. Ashmore, the wife of an officer in H.M.'s 18th Foot. This lady published anonymously in 1840 a book entitled *A Narrative of a Three Months' March and a Residence in the Dooab*. The authoress spent nearly five years in India, mostly at Cawnpore. Her book is a chatty recital of her experiences and is interesting as giving some account of a regiment on the march.

#### A talented writer

The Hon. Emily Eden wrote of social India as seen from Government House. Miss Eden was one of the two sisters of Lord Auckland who accompanied him to India in 1836. They made a tour in Upper India, and the letters written by Miss Eden during that time were published in 1860 under the title *Up the Country*. Miss Eden was a talented writer, and no mean artist. In 1844 she published *Portraits of the Princes and Peoples of India*.

Want of space prevents us dilating upon those ladies such as Mrs. Belnos, whose theme was the people of India.

Passing on to those who wrote about the life led by Europeans in South India, we have already mentioned Miss Roberts. Others whose books relate to the Western Presidency are Mrs. Graham, Mrs. Elwood, Mrs. Postans and Lady Falkland. Mrs. Maria Graham, who subsequently became Lady Calcott, is the author of the well-known *Little Arthur's History of England*. This gifted lady spent barely two years in India, partly in Madras and partly in Bombay. After her return to England there appeared in 1812 her *Journal of a Residence in India* (1809-10) illustrated from her own sketches and etchings. As a literary production this has considerable merit. Like many other lady visitors to this country, Mrs. Graham formed a poor opinion of Anglo-Indian society especially that of ladies of Madras.<sup>3</sup> Young men of that town, she declares, used to go "from house to house to retail the news, ask commissions for



the ladies, bring a bauble that has been newly set, or one which the lady has obliquely hinted at a shopping party she would willingly purchase, but that her husband does not like her to spend so much, and which she thus obtains from some young man, a quarter of whose monthly salary is probably sacrificed to his gallantry. When all the visitors who have any business are gone to their offices, another troop of idlers appears, still more frivolous than the former, and remains till tiffin."

Mrs. Elwood was perhaps the first lady to travel to India via the Red Sea : she wrote a book, which appeared in 1830, entitled *Narrative of a Journey Overland from England by the Continent of Europe, Egypt and the Red Sea to India*. Some account of this book occurs in the *In the Days of the Company*.

Mrs. Elwood gives an interesting description of life in the Bombay Presidency in the year 1827. She passes some severe strictures on English society in Bombay. "Figure to yourself," she writes, "a country town in the most remote parts of Scotland or Ireland—where the post and London newspapers do not arrive more than once a fortnight, or not so often—where local interests occupy the whole attention, where official situation gives consequence and importance, and join to these an enervating and depressing climate, which renders every employment an exertion, and some idea may be formed of Bombay. General politics and literature, the beaux arts, and public amusements are seldom touched upon, and in their place are substituted party politics—local news—private character—and, from want of something more amusing, not infrequently, scandal. The greater part of the community come out to India in their 'musically sounding teens,' a period when the human mind is, generally speaking, unacquainted with the world, and alike ignorant and uninformed. . . . Manners formed in a provincial town are seldom<sup>4</sup> first-rate, and in India, I should say generally speaking (though of course with numerous exceptions) those who have resided *least* at a Presidency, are as superior to those who, from duty or inclination, have been constantly fixed there, as the unaffected, unpretending 'county gentlemen' in England is preferable to the important and consequential 'Burra Sahib' of the country town."

The last of the Bombay lady authors are Mrs. Postans, whose *Western India*, published in 1838, is a well-written account of life



in that part of the country, and Lady Falkland, wife of the Governor, who perpetrated the work entitled *Chow-chow*.

As regards Madras, there are two books, other than Mrs. Graham's, written by ladies. In 1841 Mrs. Clemons brought out a book called *Manners and Customs of Society in India*. This is a dull account of a somewhat uneventful existence in the Madras Presidency. The second half of the book is composed of a score of chapters giving advice to young officers in the Company's army, and perhaps the best that can be said of it is that it "abounds in undisputed truths and incontrovertible propositions."

### One of the cleverest books

A year after the publication of Mrs. Clemons' mediocre production one of the cleverest books in existence treating of Indian society appeared. It is styled *Letters from India during the years 1838 to 1839*. It was published anonymously, but it is now no secret that the author was Mrs. Maitland, the wife of a Madras Civil Servant.

The lady's descriptions are inimitable. After a Madras dinner, "all sit round in the middle of the great gallery-like room, talk in whispers, and scratch their mosquito bites. Sometimes there is a little music, as languid as everything else. Concerning the company themselves, the ladies are all young and wizened, and the gentlemen are all old and wizened. Somebody says France is the paradise of married women, and England of girls. I am sure India is the paradise of middle-aged gentlemen. While they are young they are thought nothing of; just supposed to be making or marring their fortunes, as the case may be, but at about 40, when they are high in the service, are yellow and somewhat grey, they begin to be taken notice of, and are called young men."

This lady writes as follows of her guests at Rajamundry: "Some of our visitors are very sensible and agreeable, and when I have them alone they talk very well, and I like their company, but as soon as three or four get together, they speak about nothing but 'employment and promotion.' Whatever subject may be started, they contrive to twist it, turn it, clip it, and pinch it till they bring it round to that, and then they sit—and conjugate the verb 'to collect'—I am a Collector, he was a Collector, we shall be Collectors, you ought to be a Collector, they would have



been Collectors : so when it comes to that, while they conjugate 'to collect' I *decline* listening."

### Civilian and military ladies

"Civilian ladies are generally very quiet, are languid, speaking almost in whispers, simply dressed, almost ladylike and *comme il faut*, not pretty but pleasant and nice looking, are dull and give one very hard work in pumping for conversation. They talk of the 'Governor,' the 'Presidency,' the 'Overland,' and girls' schools at home, and have always daughters of about thirteen in England for education. The military ladies, on the contrary, are always quite young, pretty, noisy, effective, showily dressed, with a great many ornaments *mauvais* ton, chat incessantly from the moment they enter the house, twist their curls, shake their bustles and altogether are what you may call 'low toss'. While they are alone with me after dinner they talk about their babies, the disadvantages of scandal, officers and the Regiment, and when the gentlemen come into the drawing room they invariably flirt with them most furiously."

### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Some passages from this rare and out-of-print book about the European society in Calcutta in the year 1768 are given here :—

As the morning and evening is cooler than the day, it is usual to rise early, and sit up rather late ; for after the morning the heat is so intense, that it is difficult to attend to any business, and hardly possible to take any amusement. Ladies mostly retire to their own apartments, where the slightest covering is scarcely supportable. The most active disposition must be indolent in this climate. After dinner every one retire to sleep; it is a second night. This custome of sleeping away the hottest hours in the day is necessary, even to the strongest constitution. After this repose people dress for the evening, and enjoy the air about sun-set on their carriages, &c. The rest of the evening is for society. Living is very expensive, on account of the great rents of houses, the number of servants, the excessive price of all European commodities, such as wines, clothes, &c. The perspiration requires perpetual changes of clothes and lines; not to mention the expenences of palenqueens, carriages, and horses. Many of these things, which perhaps appear luxuries, are, in this climate, real necessities of life. It is remarkable that those Europeans who have health enjoy a greater flow of spirits than in cooler climates. Except when parties are violent, which is



sometimes the case, the society and hospitality is general ; and there is no other part of the world where people part with their money to assist each other so freely as the English in India. (pp. 291-293).

The servants who attend in a lady's apartment are generally slave girls, or Portuguese women; and the nurses for children are Portuguese. (p. 285).

But, amongst those who call themselves French and Dutch at these places; very few, amongst the women particularly, are really so, being most of them country-born; there are likewise many of these who are called English, because they are married to English-men, or live under an English government. These country-born women are the descendants of an European father, and what is called a Portuguese mother ; the boys we seldom hear anything about; but the girls who are sometimes born in the wedlock, and sometimes not, as they are fairer than their mothers, are fond of being called English, French, &c.; and, if pretty, often marry to Europeans, who sometimes arise to be people of consequence ; their children, being another remove from black, do not like to have their descent remembered; and nothing is so great an affront as to class them amongst the Portuguese. (pp. 271-72).

2. The first playhouse in Calcutta was situated at the south-west corner of Lal Bazar Street. the second "Calcutta Theatre" behind the present Writer's Buildings in Dalhousie Square. The first subscription play took place on the 30th October 1795, e.g. 'Trick upon Trick' with the musical entertainment of "the Poor Soldier."

3. The English ladies are immoderately fond of dancing, an exercise ill calculated for burning climate of the Presidency. Imagine to yourself the lovely object of your affections ready to expire with heat, every limb trembling and every feature distorted with fatigue.

—*Asiaticus*

The European is at times too highly fed. Eating and drinking rather than heat or cold send him to his grave.—Sir Henry Lawrence *Essays on the Indian Army and Oudh*.

4. Drunkenness, gambling and profane swearing were almost universally practiced. The public journals testify to the absence of "decency and propriety of lechaurires" in social life. In Decmber, 1780, one of them complains that "Eropean of all ranks" ordinarily made christmas festivities a "plea for absolute drunkenness and obscenity of conversation, etc.—*Hobson Jobson*.



## CHAPTER 7

# Englishwomen of the Eighteenth/ Nineteenth Century

W.H. CAREY

In former days, when wives were few and native mistresses many the greater number of European residents were tied to India, and had little inducement to quit it. Later, however, wives were many—mistresses few. A married man had many inducements to visit his home; his wife's health may require it; his children, perhaps, are sufficiently advanced in years to render it necessary that they should be removed to England for the sake both of physical health and mental culture. The voyage has now no terrors for delicate women or young children. At the present period of rapid locomotion it may be interesting to look back to the time of our ancestors, when the ships of the season made their passage between London and Calcutta in six months.

### Few Englishwomen

The Court of Directors at Home allowed no one to go to India without a pass, and were, strange to say, rather chary of increasing the number of European ladies. A Miss Campbell took her passage on board the *Hardwicke* for Madeira, and there being some suspicion that she intended proceeding on, thence, to India, the Court wrote to the Calcutta Government, under date January 31, 1755—"If, therefore, she shall be landed at Bengal, or at any of the settlements under your



presidency, you are hereby positively ordered to take effectual care that she is sent back to England at the expense of the owners of the *Hardwicke* upon the first ship you shall despatch." At this time annual lists of all residents in Calcutta had to be sent to London, which were carefully examined, and in one instance, the name of Miss Christian Ross being discovered as among the residents in Calcutta in 1754, she was ordered to leave the country. However, she had left of her own accord previously.

### Portuguese the first European ladies

The first European ladies who made the voyage to India were Portuguese.

A Madras correspondent writes to Mr. Hickey in July 1780:—"In my last I sent you an account of the number of ladies which had arrived here in the late ships<sup>1</sup>; there came *eleven in one vessel* ; too great a number for the peace and good order of a round house.

### In search of a husband

It appears somewhat offensive to our old fashioned notions of propriety, to observe the mode in which ladies, some of rank and education, were in the early part of the nineteenth century accustomed to dispose of themselves at Calcutta and other presidencies. This will be seen from the following extract of a letter from a young lady, who in ignorance of the prevailing practice, had been induced to go out to India in one of the Company's fleets. The letter, which we take from Macintosh's Travels, was addressed by the lady to her cousin, in 1779, who had desired her to tell her the result of her adventures, and to give advice whether it would be fit for her to try the same experiment:—

"*My dearest Maria*,—With respect to your request that I should tell you plainly what I think of these matrimonial schemes (for such they are, let people disguise them as they will,) I never can impress upon you too strongly the folly and impropriety of your making such an attempt. Certainly, the very project itself is one of the utmost delicacy; for what is it but running counter to all the dictates of that diffidence and



native modesty for which English women have been so long held up as the perfect models?

\* \* \* \*

"True it is I am married; I have obtained that for which I came out to India—a husband; but I have lost what I left behind me in my native country—happiness. Yet my husband is rich, as rich, or richer, than I could desire; but his health is ruined, as well as his temper, and he has taken me rather as a convenience than as a companion; and he plays the tyrant over me with as much severity as if I were one of the slaves that carry his palanquin. I will just give you a hasty sketch of the manner in which I came by him. What a state of things is that, where the happiness of a wife depends upon the death of that man who should be the chief not the only source of her felicity. However such is the fact in India: the wives are looking out with gratitude for the next mortality that may carry off their husbands, in order that they may return to England to live upon their jointures; they live a married life, an absolute misery, that they may enjoy a widowhood of affluence and independence. This is no exaggeration, I assure you.

"You know that, independent of others, there were thirty of us females on board the H—, who sailed upon the same speculation; we were of all ages, complexions, and sizes, with little or nothing in common, but that we were single and wished to get married. Some were absolutely old maids of the shrivelled and dry description, most of them above the age of fifty; while others were mere girls just freed from the tyranny of the dancing, music, and drawing masters at boarding school, ignorant of almost everything that was useful, and educated merely to cover the surface of their mental deformity. I promise you, to me it was no slight penance to be exposed during the whole voyage to the half sneering, satirical looks of the mates and guinea pigs (midshipmen), and it would have been intolerable, but for the good conduct and politeness of Captain S—. He was a man of most gentlemanly deportment, but the involuntary compassion I fancied I sometimes discovered in him was extremely irksome. However, we will suppose our voyage ended for nothing at all material happened, and that we are now safely landed at Calcutta.



"This place has many houses of entertainment of all descriptions, and the gaiety that prevails after the arrival of a fleet from England is astonishing. The town is filled with military and civil officers of all classes; and the first thing done after we have recovered our looks, is for the captains to give an entertainment, to which they issue general invitations; and everybody, with the look and attendance of a gentleman, is at liberty to make his appearance. The speculative ladies, who have come out in the different ships, dress themselves with all the splendour they can assume, exhausting upon finery all the little stock of money they have brought out with them from Europe. This is in truth their last, or nearly their last stake, and they are all determined to look and dance as divinely as possible.

"Such are the majority of the ladies; while the gentlemen are principally composed of those who have for some time resided in the country, and having realised fortunes, are determined to obtain wives with as little delay as possible. They are, as I have said, of all ranks but generally of pale and squalid complexions, and suffering under the grievous infliction of liver complaints. A pretty prospect this for matrimonial happiness! Not a few are old and infirm, leaning upon sticks and crutches, and even supported about the apartment by their gorgeously dressed servants, for a display of all kinds of splendour on their part is no less attempted and accomplished. These old decrepit gentlemen address themselves to the youngest and prettiest, and the youngest and prettiest, if properly instructed in their parts, betray no sort of coyness or reluctance. In fact, this is the mode in which matches are generally made; and if now and then one happy couple come together, thousands are married with no hope of comfort, and with a prospect merely of splendid misery. Generally speaking, in India, the officers make the best husbands, for they are frequently young and uninjured by the climate and are the best disposed to attend to the wishes of their wives.

"This is called the Captain's Ball, and most frequently the greater part of the expectant ladies are disposed of there; it is really curious, but most melancholy, to see them ranged round the room, waiting with the utmost anxiety for offers, and looking with envy upon all who are more fortunate than themselves.

"If however, as is sometimes the case, a considerable



number remain on hand; after the lapse of about three months, they unite in giving an entertainment at their own expense, to which all gentlemen are at liberty to go; and if they fail in this *dernier ressort*, this forlorn hope, they must give up the attempt, and return to England."

On a young lady landing she was in a manner "exhibited" before those in search of partners. For the first three or four nights the house where she resided was beset with visitors, and probably the greater part of the night was spent in receiving such. It was the rule to "strike the iron while hot," and marriages were concluded as quickly as possible. But the Governor-General's licence to be married was necessary to constitute it a legal one. On occasion of marriages the officiating minister was accustomed to receive as his fee from sixteen to twenty gold mohurs, and five gold mohurs for a baptism. No wonder that the chaplains were able to make such splendid fortunes in a short time.

We cull a portion of a poetical letter said to have been written by a lady in Calcutta, to her friend in England, describing how she spent her time during the day:—

After a sultry restless night,  
Tormented with the hum and bite  
Of pois'nous insects out of number,  
That here infest one's midnight slumber,  
I rise fatigued, almost expended,  
Yet suddenly when breakfast's ended,  
Away we hurry with our fops  
To rummage o'er the Europe shops:  
And when of caps and gauze we hear  
Oh! how we scramble for a share!  
Then should some two with keen desire  
The self-some lace or fringe admire,  
What sharp contention, arch remarks,  
Whilst trembling wait our anxious sparks.  
What smart rejoinders and replies,  
Whilst lightnings flash from gentle eyes:  
Let prudes declaim on ease and grace,  
This animates a charming face,  
This sets the blood in circulation,



And gives the town some conversation.  
 At table, next, you'd see us seated,  
 In liberal style with plenty treated.  
 Near me a gentle swain, with leave  
 To rank himself my humble slave.  
 Well, here I know I'm at my task,  
 Ten thousand things I know you'd ask,  
 As "what's his age, his size, his face,"  
 His mind and manners next you'd trace,  
 His purse, dear girl; the custom here  
 First points to that; so *en premier*,  
 A chief, my Strephon was before,  
 At some strange place that ends with *pore*,  
 Where dext'rously he swell'd his store  
 Of lakhs, and yet is adding more."

### Drinking

Drinking had long been one of the "rational" amusements with which our ancestors sought to beguile the time. And to this slow poison it may be confidently asserted that a very large proportion of the annual mortality may be attributed. Towards the end of the century, this vice began to decline. Men found that it was better to live than to drink themselves into untimely graves. Mr. Tennant, writing in 1796, says—"Regularity of living and temperance are much more prevalent among the present inhabitants than the first adventurers."

### Hooka addicts

The *hookah* was the grand whiler away of time with our ancestors in old Calcutta. Indo-British ladies were said to have been much addicted to its use,<sup>2</sup> while gentlemen, instead of their perusal of a paper "furnishing the head with politics and the heart with scandal," indulged themselves with the hookah's fume, while under the hands of the perruquier in the days when powder and pig-tails were in fashion. Grand Prè thus notices the hookah and its attendant the hookaburdar:—"Every hooka-burdar prepares separately that of his master in an adjoining apartment, and, entering all together with the dessert, they range themselves round the table. For half an hour there is a continued clamour, and nothing is distinctly heard but the cry for



silence, till the noise subsides and the conversation assumes its usual tone. It is scarcely possible to see through the cloud of smoke which fills the apartment. The effect produced by these circumstances is whimsical enough to a stranger, and if he has not his hookah he will find himself in an awkward and unpleasant situation. The rage of smoking extends even to the ladies; and the highest compliment they can pay a man is to give him preference by smoking his hookah. In this case it is a point of politeness to take off the mouthpiece he is using, and substitute a fresh one, which he presents to the lady with his hookah, who soon returns it. This compliment is not always of a trivial importance; it sometimes signifies a great deal to a friend, and often still more to a husband."

Among the advertisements of an European firm in Calcutta in 1792, we observe "Elegant Hookah bottoms—urn shaped, richly cut, with plates and mouthpieces." As noticed before, the long hookah was considered not only fashionable but an indispensable article in the dining-room at every house of elegance and respectability, and a hookah rug constituted one of the carpet work fancies of young ladies of the day, as presents to those of their relatives and friends whom they respected or loved.<sup>3</sup> We remember the time when the hookah was introduced with the dessert, and we have seen thirty hookahs on each side of the table, one behind almost every diner, with its respective hookahburdar feeding the chillum (reservoir which contained the tobacco) and keeping up the red glow of the *gool* (ball of fire) while his master was employed in converse with his neighbours. The gurgle-gurgle of these sixty hookahs was strange music, and rather discordant, but no dinner would have been considered *the thing* without such accompaniment. It was not till 1840 that the practice began to fall into disuse.

### Card-playing

Mrs. Fay writes of card-playing :—"After tea, either cards or music fill up the space till ten, when supper is generally announced. Five-card loo is the usual game; and they play a rupee a fish, limited to ten. This will strike you as being enormously high, but it is thought nothing of here. Tredille and whist are much in fashion, but ladies seldom join in the latter; for though the stakes are moderate, bets frequently run



high among the gentlemen, which renders those anxious who sit down for amusement, lest others should lose by their blunders."

An excellent expression is that, "*durwaza bund*," (the door is shut) and one to which several meanings are attached. "In some instances it implies that the lady of the house is lazy, and has not dressed to receive visitors; in others that baby is ill, or perhaps otherwise occupied, and that she is attending on it : on some occasions, that she is suffering from one or other of the numerous forms of indisposition that afflict the sex in India. All these are valid excuses in their way; but how comes it that at such and such a house where we received this message, we saw, standing in the compound, a buggy and horse, extremely like those of Captain Snooks, of one of the native regiments that after four years' residence at the station mutinied and dissolved themselves?" How can we reconcile this little fact with the message we have just received ? The interpretation is, however, easy. It signifies that the lady is more agreeably occupied than she would be if receiving us."

### Dancing

Notice is given for a series of "assemblies" to be held at the "Harmonic House," once a week in November, 1784. This seems to have been the commencement of *public* gaieties in Calcutta. On the appearance of this announcement, the proprietors of the "London Tavern" advertise a series of similar "assemblies" at their house. "They have contracted with a person to supply them with oysters;" from which it would appear that oysters formed a regular and favourite refreshment with visitors to such places of amusement. At the Harmonic it is notified—"No hookahs to be admitted upstairs."

The following strange and curious rules for the first of a series of subscription dances at the Calcutta Theatre (1792) will amuse our readers :—"(1) That minuets be danced on the nights of dress assemblies only. (2) That ladies be taken out to dance minuets according to the rank their husbands hold in the King's or Hon'ble Company's service (3) That ladies whose husbands are not in the King's or Hon'ble Company's service, be taken out to dance minuets in the order they come into the room, and that this regulation hold good with regard to



unmarried ladies. (In preservation of this rule, ladies are to receive tickets as they enter the room.) (4) That all ladies draw lots for places in country dances. (5) That any lady allowing the first couple to pass the place corresponding with the number of her ticket shall stand the last couple for that dance. (6) That ladies having gone down a country dance shall stand up for all the couples who are to follow, or not dance any more that night. (7) That hookers be not admitted to the ball room during any part of the night. (But hookers might be admitted to the supper rooms, to the card rooms, to the boxes in the theatre, and to each side of the assembly room, between the large pillars and the walls.)"

A ball in India is a different affair from the same scene in England. "In the first place, the company includes no old ladies—at least, of the softer sex; for doubtless there are the usual proportion in breeches. The absence of elderly persons in Indian society, is one of the first things that strike a new arrival. At a certain age, people usually leave the country, and thus there is always a degree of youthfulness about the company one meets. But, strange to say, young unmarried ladies are as scarce as old ones, and naturally more in demand : consequently, a lady's dancing days last as long as she remains in India, and a man has the satisfaction of seeing the mother of his six children as much in request, even among young sparks, as before he married her, while any damsel not yet wedded has as many partners on hand as she could accommodate in a week. Hence the light fantastic toe has enough to do, and has to keep up the steam to the end of the chapter. Fortunately the ball rooms are expressly adapted for such efforts, being lofty, spacious, and airy, windows open on every side, and ventilation facilitated by a hundred-punkah power. A white cloth, coated with French chalk, covers the floor and affords a smooth surface for the feet. Among the male portion of the company there is a great predominance of uniforms, while the toilettes of the ladies are of the most expensive kind, and, there being no lack of lights, the whole forms a brilliant scene."

In 1793, we find that ladies were accustomed to dance from 9 in the evening till 5 o'clock in the morning—and at the beginning of the present century, the ladies, according to Lord Valentia, were in the habit not unfrequently of dancing them-



selves into the grave. "Consumptions," he writes, "are very frequent among the ladies, which I attribute, in a great measure, to their incessant dancing even during the hottest weather. After such violent exercise they go into the verandas and expose themselves to a cool breeze and damp atmosphere."

"ADVERTISEMENT.—Mr. Macdonald presents his respects to the ladies and gentlemen amateurs of dancing, and informs them that he will instruct any lady or gentleman, who are in the habit of dancing, in the fashionable Scotch step, and its application to country dancing, for sicca rupees 100. Besides the fashionable step, the athletic and agile, may be taught a variety of Scotch steps, equally elegant, but more difficult in the execution, for an additional charge" (1795.)

"ADVERTISEMENT.—Subscription Concert. As Mr. Oehme finds the rules concerning his concerts are not generally understood in the settlement, he takes this method to prevent any further mistake. Seven ladies, scholars of Mr. Oehme, have each a separate list; and upon one or the other of those lists the name of every subscriber is entered. The subscription is 80 sicca rupees; and the ladies of the families of subscribers are invited by tickets, with their names upon them; but neither these nor subscribers' tickets are transferable. Any lady may, by entering her name in one of the lists, become a subscriber for any number of visiting tickets, at 100 sicca rupees each; and such visiting tickets, having the subscribing lady's name on them, become transferable either to a lady or a gentleman."

### 'Three Hundred A Year'

One of the prizes held out to a young lady on reaching India, as open to all comers, was "three hundred a year, dead or alive," which passed into a proverb and was stamped on the damsel's brow as plain as print. The meaning was that by marrying a member of the Civil Service, she secured a husband with at least £300 a year, and at his death, would be entitled to a pension from the Civil Fund to the same amount. The latter provision, however, was contingent on the husband having served a certain period; and, on one occasion, this fact was communicated to a lady at a grand dinner just after her marriage, when she could not conceal her disappointment, but



called across the table to her husband—"John, John, it's a *do* after all : it is a *do*."

### Lady's revenge

A very extraordinary scene occurred at Delhi in 1831. Lieutenant Talbot, of the 8th Native Infantry, had been tried by court-martial for an alleged insult toward the wife of Lieutenant Ramsay, on which charge he had been honorably acquitted. Shortly after the acquittal of Lieutenant Talbot, while he was sitting as a guest in the mess-room of the 1st Native Infantry, a stranger, habited in a foraging cap and military surtout, entered the apartment, and, standing behind his chair, attempted to discharge two pistols at his head both of which were afterwards discovered to have been heavily loaded with buck shot. Fortunately both missed fire. Alarm was given, and the gentleman who sat next Lieutenant Talbot, starting up, seized the assassin, and both falling together over some hookahs, to the surprise and consternation of all present, the voice of Mrs. Ramsay betrayed her disguise, and in the supposed officer they beheld a disappointed and revengeful woman. She was asked, whilst sitting in the chair, how she ascertained precisely Mr. Talbot's exact position at table? She said, she saw him through the chink of the outward door; adding, that she had first gone to the mess of the 8th regt., but not finding Lieut. Talbot there, she came over to the mess of the 1st regt. She also said that, on the evening preceding, she had been to the 8th mess, to look for Lieut. Talbot, but there were only two officers there; Lieut. Talbot was not one of them. She likewise said that she had determined to take Lieut. Talbot's life from the moment he had attempted to embrace her, and ruin her character.

### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Miss Mansell, the niece of a Member of Council, had come out to Madras to stay with her uncle. As soon as she landed she made a formal charge of rape against the commander of the East India man in which she sailed. The Captain's case was an admission of intimacy with Miss Mansell; but he alleged that from her arrival on board she had not ceased to pester him with her attentions. Rather early in the session



Miss Mansell's character began to suffer; one witness admitted that at Portsmouth she was caught "playing at Tagg with a couple of footmen" Miss Mansell's chief witness was a Mrs. Mary Coales who deposed that she had often seen Miss Mansell cry and exclaim "she could never be happy" on account of the Captain's behaviour. Other witnesses admitted that Miss Mansell had been intimate with two other young men on the board, so that at this stage the Council broke up the trial and formally acquitted the Captain. Obviously Miss Mansell ought to have been prosecuted for perjury, or the Captain awarded some compensation for his imprisonment; but then the prosecutrix was related to a Member of Council and so the Captain while being acquitted was treated to a severe lecture to the effect that his "relation to this young woman would be a perpetual Blot on him", since he had taken away her character. And when the wretched man exclaimed that she had no character even before she came on board, he was "stopped from proceeding in this sort."—*British Social Life in India*.

2. Many ladies began to favour the hookah. At receptions they sat in carefully posed attitudes with the coil of the hookah encircling their waists like Cretan snake goddesses; and it was a very flattering gesture for a lady to offer a gentleman the mouthpiece of her hookah for a refreshing puff.

3. The hooka is the machine from which the smoke of tobacco and aromatics are inhaled, through a tube of several feet, or even yards in length, which is called a snake. To show the deference or indulgence shown by ladies to the practice of smoking, we need but transcribe a card for the Governor General's and his lady's concert and supper:—"Mr. and Mrs. Hastings present their compliments to Mr.—, and request the favor of his company to a concert and supper, on Thursday next, at Mrs. H.—'s house in town. The concert to begin at 8 o'clock. Mr.—is requested to bering no servants except his hookahburdar,—1st October, 1779."



## CHAPTER 8

# An Army Wife in India

MRS. ELLIS

The precarious tenure of domestic life is the very canker of domestic happiness in India. Not only are the children often sent to England, while yet mere infants, but sickness frequently compels the wife to seek health either in Europe, or our own hill stations. Besides these trials, which press pretty equally on all classes, we must not overlook the hardships which in this climate are specially experienced by people of small income. To the wealthy, whether civil, mercantile or military, climate is a matter of secondary importance. A large airy house, well ventilated, carefully closed and opened at the proper hours, with a good equipage and good servants will make the damp of Calcutta or the hot winds of Delhi endurable, if not almost enjoyable. It is the adventurer struggling with pecuniary difficulties, who feels the full misery of a tropical climate. We allude to the man whose avocations expose him to the sun, and the woman whose dwelling does not keep out the dust, glare and rain, and the scanty dimensions of whose habitation give only the choice of suffocation from hot air impregnated with dust, or of a similar fate from the entire stagnation of that element. Most sojourners in the East must, of course, come at first under this class; but as the majority of the Company's servants are Military, we limit ourselves, on the present occasion, to a notice of the inconveniences which the wife of a Regimental Officer, when she first 'buckles on the knapsack,' must calculate on, and the hopeless, endless evils that beset women in the Barracks.



**Peculiar problems**

A woman when she marries a soldier, ought to recollect that his profession entails on her a definite and often a very arduous duty. Not that she is to become that most offensive hybrid, a soldierly woman. She may easily lay aside all that is becoming and delicate in her own sex, but she cannot in exchange assume any masculine qualities higher than those of slang and indifference. Her 'highest glory and best praise' are of another kind. She has to bear as best she may, the privations peculiar to her lot, and to watch against its natural fruits, irritability, frivolity, slovenliness, procrastination. She has to encounter the 'sudden partings, such as press the life out from young hearts ;' to incur responsibility alone ; to suffer sorrow by herself. Let us suppose an every day case, when a corps has just reached a new station. Here is a Captain or Subaltern with a wife and family. At first they must remain in tents, while they look at the several available houses in Cantonments, in search of one that will dovetail into the very unequal dimensions of their means and their wishes. Having curtailed the latter, and perhaps a little exceeded the former, they are housed by the time the hot winds set in, and congratulate themselves on being at length settled for two or three years at least. Being a quite, domestic pair, who have always managed to keep out of debt, they do not launch forth like many of their neighbours ; but, then, they like to have every thing nice and neat about them ; and are very accessible to the temptation of cheap bargains. One of the first discoveries they make is, that a bow-room at one end of the house can be built for the merest trifle ; in fact that it would be such an improvement as to ensure the sale of the Bungalow any day, for more than it cost. Just then, there is a capital opportunity of buying cheap furniture ; and, as our friends are bent on remaining where they are, for two years at least, they may as well make themselves comfortable. The bills for workmen and auction purchases turn out rather heavier than was expected ; and are the harder to meet because the eldest child's drooping health makes it imperative that she should be sent home in the cold weather ; and there are certain other inevitable expences anticipated a few months hence. The husband and wife discourse of these matters, rather uneasily,



but console themselves that they can save a good deal before the cold season.

At length, the rains break up ; the mornings become cool and bracing ; the *tatees* are consigned to the godowns, and even the *punkahs* are taken down. Little Missie's cheeks lose somewhat of their chalky tint, and her mother tries to persuade herself that they are becoming rosy, and that there can be no necessity for sending her home this year ; but the father, more rationally, recollects the effects of the last hot weather, and resolves to make any sacrifice rather than expose his darling child's health to such another ordeal. The sad, sad day arrives, when the parents consign their little one to a friend who is on her way home, and promises to take care of the child ; the mother feels like one 'whose occupation's gone' until a newly arrived little one opens a fresh source of interest. But now a new care arises. The annual relief of the army is published. "The relief is out," and their regiment is ordered to the North-West frontier, a march of some two months from their present station. The tents and camp equipage which had been sold a few months before, for a mere trifle, must now be replaced at a ruinous expence ; there is a report that the number of troops at the station they are leaving will be much reduced, so that houses and furniture are a mere drug in the market. Then, every body who has changed his abode, knows how unaccountably demands for money start, as it seems, absolutely out of the ground, on the eve of his departure. Some servants are to be paid up and discharged ; others are to be hired and cannot proceed without an advance of wages. Hackeries and camels have also to be engaged, and half the hire must be paid in advance. Numberless are the petty expences which arise after the last rupee of ready money has been spent.

It is well when scenes like these do not produce recrimination, petulance, and alienation, but we are supposing a really attached couple, who have good sense and good temper sufficient to keep down these altercations. A loan from the Agra Bank relieves their present difficulties, and they hope that, before the first instalment becomes due, an Adjutancy or a Brigade-Majorship, or "*something or other*," that sheet-anchor of the sanguine, will come in their way.

The regiment at last *moves*, and those who have marched



with one can alone know the comprehensive meaning of that expression. On the first march, the cook, who had received an advance of pay, runs away ; the khidmutgar declares he knows nothing of kitchen work ; the ayah strikes for higher wages, and worst of all, the dhace is seized with a fever. The baby is hungry and peevish, the elder children catch cold and the poor mother is almost at her wit's end. She finds too that, the two huge camel trunks, in which she had stowed away the hot weather clothing to be left behind, have somehow been brought with them, instead of the pair containing the flannels and warm dresses for the camp. But she tries to laugh down the lump that she feels rising in her throat, and to make the best of whatever is within her reach. We will not follow out the annoyances of the march, the lame camels, and recusant hackery-drivers ; the smashed crockery, and grumbling servants ; the swarms of flies that light on the table whenever the skreen is lifted, and the two stirring boys, who cannot be kept from running in the sun and among the cattle. Nor need we describe the sudden storm that fills the tents with blinding, stifling dust, or the heavy rain that soaks them, so that they defy all efforts at pitching, while the lady sits forlorn in the palkee-gharee into which she has huddled all the children and women servants, to keep them dry. All these are common grievances, and, with health and good humour, may be borne without much difficulty. After the first week's march, matters some how jolt into their right places, while the delightful clear, cold weather that succeeds the Christmas rain, braces up the system ; the corps continues its route in good spirits, and count on the day when it is to reach its new destination. They arrive, and find orders awaiting them to proceed on foreign service, to some hostile region, to which no man of common sense would take his family. Then does the wife begin to number the days that remain to her before she sees her husband depart for a place whence so few have ever returned ; then do the couple feel the grinding pressure of pecuniary distress. Remittances must be made for the child that is gone home ; fresh expences must be incurred, to fit out the husband for his campaign, and the wife must be provided with a suitable residence in our own territories.



### Blessing of hill station

These are times when the blessing of our Hill Stations can be really appreciated. Loneliness is indeed lonely to a woman of narrow income, living by herself in the Plains. The long, hot day is spent with darkened doors, while none but dusky faces and foreign tones are around her. The breathing-time of evening comes, but brings not the delightful snug drive in the buggy, in lieu of which she is fain to satisfy herself with a chair on the east side of the Veranda, whence she may regale herself with a view of the scorched compound, and its dreary enclosure of sun-dried clay wall. The children are ill, but there is no father to share their mother's fatigues and anxieties. The woman, in short, who was accustomed to look for guidance at every step, now finds she must walk alone, over a rough and dreary path. The Hills, however, offer a mitigation to many of the trials we have named. There is a 'refreshment' which none but Indians can estimate, in being able to keep the windows open all day, and in always having something fresh and green without to rest the eyes on. There is society in the blazing and crackling of the pine-wood fire of an evening ; there is luxury in breathing the mountain air and watching its salutary effects on the children. These sweets are infused by a Father's hand in the bitter cup that he sees it good for many of his creatures to taste and drink deep of ; it is with pain we observe how often the blessing is abused.

We need not here dwell on the squabbles and jealousies that render it so difficult for ladies to live comfortably together, and to which we may attribute the fact that *chum* is almost exclusively a noun masculine. Men can live in the same house, share the expences of house-keeping, and see as much or as little of each other as they like. Thus they can go on, month after month, without any misunderstanding. How it comes, let others tell ; we only state the fact that ladies are rarely gifted with the like power, and that their taking a house together in the Hills generally proves a failure. These petty bickerings and childish peckings at each other are bad enough, but they are thrown into the shade by more glaring evils.

### Duties of a soldier's wife

In the case we have been supposing—which is nevertheless,



far from imaginary,—what are the wife's specific duties ? Obviously, in the first place, that her husband should suffer no one gratuitous anxiety on her account and should feel no one care that she can avert. Now is the time to shew that her affection for him is something higher than selfish tenderness. A woman will sometimes, in her passionate fondness, urge her husband not to leave her, or not to expose himself to danger, though he could not, in honor and duty, hold back. She will seek some loophole through which he may creep, to avoid the hardships of the service on which his fellow soldiers are going, and if he has accompanied them she will weary him with importunities to seize the first pretext for returning,—in plain English, for deserting his post. If these importunities find a confederate in the husband's own heart, he will probably make them an excuse to himself, for doing what he is already well inclined to do ; but if he be made of the stuff of which a true soldier is composed, he will only feel mortified that his wife is of so different a stamp so incapable of appreciating his duty. Her lamentations will at length appear to him but the wailings of a peevish child, deprived of some favorite toy, and her opinion, or even feelings, may proportionately weigh little with him. A true wife feels that her husband's honor is in her keeping ; that it is her privilege to urge and cheer him forward, in the straight path of duty, not to allure him away from it. She recollects that he has plighted his word, not only as her husband, but as a public servant, and that it is base and cowardly to 'eat the salt' of Government in time of peace, and hang back in the day of need. Looking no further than the motives to be gathered from reason and affection, she may learn not only that safety depends very little on place, but that there are considerations higher than personal safety. So common-place a view of the case in open to all : but the heart that has learned to look beyond what is visible and transitory, will have a yet more unflinching confidence, while pursuing the course of duty.

Deeper anxieties, however, than any we have spoken of, may corrode the mind of an absent husband, when he thinks of a young, pretty and inexperienced wife left with no guide but her own discretion. This is delicate ground, which we would not explore in search of personal gossip. We would only entreat our country women to consider the poisonous fruits which they



have seen of imprudence, and to enquire whether they are not fostering within themselves the very seed that would, when occasion served, bring forth a similar harvest of bitterness.—“*Our Kabool disasters.*”—The present, and even the rising generation must be gathered to their father before these words lose their fearful import, or the ideas they convey can pass into the chamber of mental petrifications. Yet is there one disastrous result of the Affghan war that has rarely been adverted to—the domestic infelicities that arose from the domestic separation of the campaign.

### Young in years, younger in experience

Any one who observed the current of military life in our Upper Provinces during the season when the army of the Indus was assembled, must remember the dismal crash of family comfort on every hand which accompanied that event. No force on so large a scale had been assembled for many a day. Young ladies had perhaps heard from the elder matrons of India legends about former campaigns, about a soldier's dangers, and a wife's anxieties. All these however belonged to past times, as much as the wars of York and Lancaster, and were listened to as having been shocking enough for the sufferers, but not as likely to affect the present generation. A treasure escort, or a change of station was about the severest service that many of our officers had seen, when the anticipated campaign beyond the Indus set the whole military world astir. The rendezvous of the force at Ferozepore, in 1838, was a grand spectacle:—war in its holiday garb, with its hideous features concealed. The troops left Hindustan, as the newspaper correspondents averred, ‘in the best possible order, and the highest spirits imaginable;’ ‘may be they did, may be they did’nt,’ as Bailie Nicol Jarvie would say. Our present enquiries respect those who were left behind. Of these, the Officer's wife of whom we have drawn a faint sketch may be taken as a sample; perhaps we have selected a peculiarly favourable case, for we have assumed on both sides more than an average share of affection, good sense, and rectitude. It would be easy to find instances where a husband's extravagance or neglect demanded tenfold circumspection and prudence on that part of his wife. But, without advertng to extreme cases, either favorable or unfavorable, let



us estimate the position in which the majority of these ladies were left. Young in years, still younger in experience, the mothers of children, either pressing on their hourly attention in this country, or demanding yet deeper solicitude at home. They were the wives of soldiers, who might at any moment be called to scenes of peril, of anguish, and of death itself: they were the partners of men whose incomes had barely sufficed for the exigencies of a peaceful cantonment life, and the greater part of whom were involved in debt by the contingent expenses of taking the field, and keeping up a double, or, if there were children at home, a triple establishment. These are trials that neither a soldier nor his wife, if worthy of the name, will shrink from. The conduct they elicit tests the character. It is then that we find in ourselves and in others, depths and shallows that we dreamed not of until fathomed by the sounding-line of sorrow.

Many a feeling of womanly heroism was called forth and ripened during the years that saw our troops beyond the Indus; but these were the exceptions, and we are bound to say that the general aspect of conjugal life, during that period was not remarkably creditable to the ladies of the land. We are not about to notice those cases of flagrant misconduct, which incurred reprobation in every society; and which have received the brand of public censure. The misfortune is, that condemnation, and, what is more important, *compunction*, usually slumbers till the evil has become irremediable. Might it not be wiser to try in time the preventive system?

Real life contains very few "Oliver Twists" and "Little Nellies." Perhaps we are prepared to sympathize with a youthful, heart-broken widow, in her decent, mourning garb, refusing to be comforted. Help may, however, be as much needed, by a poor uncouth-looking girl, in a dirty white bed gown, resembling one whose appearance and words now rise vividly to our remembrance, as she mingled her lamentations for "the poor fellow she had just buried," with most business-like consideration respecting the next husband she should take, "when decency would permit." "My mother," said the poor girl we speak of, who, be it observed was herself a mother, though not quite fourteen years old, "My mother is thinking of a *poticary* for me, but I would rather take another man out of the Artillery." "You had a good husband, then?" said we, "Indeed



I had, my mother thought he was not kind to me because he used to beat me; but I deserved it well, for I was a great scamp." "A great scamp!" we repeated, in some dismay. "How?" "I used to be playing marbles with the boys, when he wanted his supper ready." Pity must put on her walking-shoes, when she steps forth to help cases like this, or when she is not chilled, while listening to some narrative of sudden bereavement, by some such parenthetical remark of the speaker's as this: "At that time I was in the light Company, the next husband I got was the Canteen Sergeant, and the man I have now, is only a Lance Corporal." And this reminds us of a woman who, after listening respectfully to some remarks about the ignorance in which her daughter was growing up, replied: "Yes, but people are just as bad at home, when I married my first husband, poor ignorant creature that I was, I did not know a Sergeant's stripe from a Corporal's."

When a European Regiment was taking the field, our commiseration for the cares and sorrows of the women who are left behind, has ere now been rudely disturbed by observing the anxiety of parents that their daughters should be married before the Corps marches, "Why," we have asked, "should you allow such a mere child to marry, when her husband will leave her next week." "Because she can then draw wife's pay while he's away: and if any thing should happen to him, she will get her six months' widow's pension." On these, and many other points, perhaps the women of the barracks merely *say*, what some of their more refined sisters *think*.

#### A boat disaster

It is now many years ago since H. M.'s 44th Regiment embarked on the Ganges in a fleet of country boats. Among them, at that time, were two sisters, the eldest of whom was not above sixteen years old: Mary and Eliza were great favorites in the regiment, and were both married to kind and respectable men. The husbands, desirous of securing more comfortable accommodation than could be found in the boats provided for the privates, arranged that their wives, each of whom had a young infant, should proceed in the boat with the Sergeant-Major and his wife, while they themselves were with their Company. Near Dinapore, the fleet encountered a violent gale,



and was dispersed, and many boats were swamped. Towards night, the tempest lulled, and the shattered remnant of the fleet, "cast anchors out of the stern, and wished for day." They missed the Sergeant-Major's budgerow, which had been driven across the river, while the other boats had sought refuge on the Dinapore bank. Next morning, as soon as it was light, a small party of the 44th, including the two husbands we speak of, went across in a *Dinghi*, to see what had become of the budgerow. They found it aground, close to the shore, the after part under water and only the bow visible. The Sergeant-Major and his wife, with the crew were sitting on the bank, cold, dripping and hungry. Having been on the roof when the vessel struck, they had managed to scramble ashore ; but Mary and Eliza were in the cabin, and no one had ascertained their fate. All was now calm ; the river had subsided sufficiently to admit of the men breaking open the roof with hatchets, and making their way into the cabin. There lay the two young mothers, each with her infant ; the water appeared to have rushed in so suddenly as to suffocate them, before they could even make a struggle. Some of the men immediately returned to Dinapore, to carry the sad news and to bring back some women to dress and lay out the bodies. About sunset that evening a mournful group were assembled, some standing on the bank ; others crowding the sterns of those boats that had escaped the storm ; all eagerly watching the course of a black speck that was seen approaching from the other side. Just below its confluence with the Soane, the Ganges takes a bend, expanding into a vast lake-like sheet of water, and this broad, shining surface now reflected the boat, as it neared its destination. In it stood the boatmen, nearly naked, plying their huge, unwieldy oars, and apparently unconscious what freight they carried. There were the grey-headed Sergeant-Major and his wife, pale, exhausted, death-like : beside them sat two young men, who neither spoke nor moved, but whose eyes were fixed on a white sheet, spread over part of the deck of the boat. There also were the women who had crossed the river in the morning ; they were loud in their wailings and lamentation as they neared their comrades, and lifting up the sheet, showed the corpses of poor Mary and Eliza, each dressed in grave-clothes and each with her infant resting on her arm. They were buried at Dinapore that same evening.



### School for European girls

The Upper and Lower Orphan Schools are among the best known of our Calcutta educational institutions. The former, few of whose inmates are of purely European blood, is probably more eligibly situated in the plains than in a colder climate. The Lower School contains a majority of unmixed European parentage, and for such there can be no question that they would be better located in the Hills. In both establishments the system of training for the girls might be greatly improved by being rendered more homely and practical; more a preparation for the stations they are likely to fill. A soldier or clerk would probably rather that his wife knew how to cut the largest possible number of shirts out of a piece of long-cloth, than that she could work the most beautiful bead-purses in the world. Not many weeks have passed since we were conversing with a respectable woman who came to India about twenty years ago as a soldier's wife. We asked her about the characteristics of the Eurasian women in the barracks, whether they were not better suited for that life as constitutionally acclimated, and as less accessible to the temptations of drink than our poor European women. Her reply was, 'They care less for liquor, but more for cloths. One of them would do any thing for a pair of gold-ear-rings,' 'and do you,' we inquired, find no better habits among those from the Orphan school? 'Indeed,' replied our informant, 'I see very little they have learned there. They like to be lolling on the bed all day, reading a story-book, or talking Hindustani with one of their own sort.'

There is another, and in most respects an excellent establishment in Calcutta, the European Female Orphan Asylum. It was established some thirty years ago by Sir Jasper Nicolls and the late Reverend Mr. Thomason. A friend, well qualified to judge, assured us lately that he could name at least thirty of the girls brought up there, who are now the heads of families and whose lives are an honour to their sex and faith. Great, then, must be the good this institution has effected, but its benefits would be incalculably extended, were it transferred to Chirra-Poonjee or Darjeeling. Nature never intended that English girls should be brought up in Bengal: had those our friend spoke of been reared among the Hills, they, *and their children* would have possessed far better constitutions physically, and we cannot



help thinking that they would have been morally improved. Mental energy, we are aware, does not always accompany bodily strength; but the former is very rarely found when the latter is wanting.

The pressing need for such refuge can only be estimated by those who have lived among our troops, whose duties have presented to their view European women in the barrack, on the march, in boats, and in camp; who have seen young girls and married women, in the midst of drunken, half-naked men, hearing little but blasphemy and ribaldry, exposed to the extremes of heat and cold, surrounded by influence that render decency nearly impossible, and make devotion seem almost a mockery. Well might we despair of finding even 'ten righteous' in such a scene of degradation. But let us remember that, when a man gifted even with prophetic discernment, believed that his nation contained not one worshipper of the true God, Omniscience saw therein 'seven thousand men who had not bowed the knee to Baal.' Neither is the moral desolation of our barracks uncheered by some bright spots. Throughout the present article, we have had reference peculiarly to our country-women; and therefore, while we duly appreciate well conducted soldiers, we now speak only of their wives. Among this class there are some, towards whom we feel a reverence that we want words to express. Sober and industrious in their habits, humane to the sufferers around them, holding on their unostentatious, upright demeanour, we have known them actually succeed in training their daughters to better habits than are sometimes found among 'finished young ladies.' Compared to worth like this, what are the sheltered, cultivated, applauded marits of women in a happier class? Those we now have in view, live their life of hardship, and when they die they are buried,

"No marble tells us where, and with their names,  
No bard embalms and sanctified his song,"

But 'their record is on high,' and the last great day shall declare it.



## CHAPTER 9

# Englishwomen in the Rebellion

MRS. CASE AND TWO SISTERS

### Proper training

Combativeness is decidedly more largely developed in the male half of creation, and right and fit it is that it should be so. Far from implanting it in woman, we hold that it is a sign of barbarism when the women of a nation forget the tenderness of their sex and their natural offices of peacemakers and comforters, and become the promoters of vengeance and the stirrers up of strife. The women of Afghanistan will drink the blood of the murderer of their kinsfolk; the women of Spain will watch every incident of a bull fight, the gored and bleeding horses, the tortured bull, the wounds and deadly jeopardy of the men, with unflinching eye and uncompassionate heart; but that there is a possible medium between unfeminine hardness and downright cowardice, is shewn every day by the calm heroism of some of the most gentle of women. We maintain that calmness and presence of mind in danger might be rendered much more general by education. The little girl should be taught that it is as shameful for her to scream at a spider, to weep with fear in a boat, to betray unreasonable fear where there is no danger, or be guilty of unreasonable conduct when the danger is real, as it is for her brother. If she cannot help, she should at least not hinder the measures necessary to be taken in the hour of peril. A child of either sex can be trained to obedience under all circumstances, to sit still if the horses run away, or the boat ships a wave; and the women so trained will be very unlikely to incur



the guilt and disgrace of failing in the wife's first duty of being a help-meet to her husband under all circumstances.

### **Motivated impulse makes a heroine**

We never knew a man admire sobs and shrieks, wringing of hands, agonizing fears, fainting or even the most passionate anxiety for his own safety, especially if he had to carry a woman who ought to have walked, or if he had to attend to her instead of to the business before him. To show how much in this respect may be done by education, we need not refer to Spartan mothers, or to the brave German women immortalized by Tacitus. Livingstone relates of some African tribe that the women are trained to repress all outward manifestation of fear or pain. A mother will say to her little girl;—"You are a woman, and women never cry." But though much may be done by education, every thing can be done by the will, nerved by a sense of duty. We have seen cases of women recovered from hysterics by the actual presence of imminent danger; they knew it was now a matter of life and death, recovered their senses and the use of their limbs, and behaved with perfect propriety till the crisis was over. One young lady, who had the habit, which she declared she could not help, of sorrowing on the slightest surprize or accident, was not only silent, but showed remarkable control over others, while the house she was in filled with rebels thirsting for the blood of herself and her friends. We constantly hear of acts of the real heroine performed by women under the impulse of feeling strong enough to overpower all thought of personal danger. Perhaps one of the most remarkable instances was that of a lady who suddenly saw a tiger gazing at the carriage in which her children were sitting. Quietly and steadily she passed between the animal and the carriage, shut the doors of it, and returned in safety. Maternal love gave her this presence of mind, and we maintain that, if cultivated, other motives would be found able to do so.

### **Essential for a soldier's wife**

If this training to self-command and courage be requisite for every woman, it is essential for the wife of a soldier; and we all know that the inculcation of the most anti-military precepts never yet sufficed to secure our daughters from that contingency. Still



less will it do so now, when the soldier has been replaced in his proper position in public estimation. Before the Crimean campaign the army was looked down upon as more ornamental than useful. Young officers were often boys fit for nothing else, or eldest sons who entered with the intention of spending a few years pleasantly and leaving the so-called "service" when they married but without an idea of devoting their lives to it as a profession. To talk of military matters was voted "shop," the uniform was doffed whenever it was practicable, a rich man's son generally sold out or exchanged when the Regiment was ordered to a disagreeable station like the Crimea.

War was seen to be no pageant but a stern and dreadful reality, the soldier no trifler but a self-devoted warrior. The nation awoke to this perception ; it thrilled "the stout heart of England's Queen," and she expressed the feeling of her people in giving vent to her own generous emotions and queenly sympathies. That red tunic which it pleased Her Majesty to wear, and which was made a subject of mirth by the light-minded foreigner, only marked her desire to identify herself with "her beloved troops," and to show herself the Head of the Army as she is the Head of the Nation.

### Courage of an Englishwoman

The hurricane which has swept over India has deepened and strengthened this feeling. There is no man who does not raise his head, when he thinks of those noble women whose conduct has been such, that, to use Lord Palmerston's words, it will be henceforward praise enough for any man to say he has shown "the courage of an Englishwoman."

Captain Mowbray Thompson speaks of a young and very attractive woman, whose attached husband had sent her down the country *for safety*, and who, long after she had been caught (as it appeared by mere accident,) and perished in the storm at Cawnpore, continued to address letters to her and congratulate himself on her "being safe in Calcutta."

"Two or three days after the arrival of the tidings from Delhi of the massacre which had been perpetrated in the old city of the Moguls, Mrs. Fraser, the wife of an officer in the 27th Native Infantry, reached our cantonments, having travelled dak from that scene of bloodshed and revolt. The native driver



who had taken her up in the precincts of the city, brought her faithfully to the end of her hazardous journey of 266 miles. The exposure which she had undergone was evident from a bullet that had pierced the carriage. Her flight from Delhi was but the beginning of the sorrows of this unfortunate lady, though she deserves rather to be commemorated for her virtues than her sufferings. During the horrors of the siege she won the admiration of all our party by her indefatigable attentions to the wounded. Neither danger nor fatigue seemed to have power to suspend her ministry of mercy. Even on the fatal morning of embarkation, although she had escaped to the boats with scarcely any clothing upon her, in the thickest of the deadly volleys poured upon us from the banks, she appeared alike indifferent to danger and to her own scanty covering; while with perfect equanimity and imperturbed fortitude she was entirely occupied in the attempt to soothe and relieve the agonized sufferers around her, whose wounds scarcely made their condition worse than her own. Mrs. Fraser was one of the party recaptured from the boats, and is reported to have died from fever before the terrific killing that immediately preceded General Haverlock's recapture of Cawnpore."

### Brave deeds

We find three ladies taking refuge at the Flagstaff Tower at Delhi, and immediately setting to work with a Sergeant's wife to ease the sufferings of poor Colonel Ripley, laying him on "a nice soft rezai," and bathing his temples with lavender water—one of the party, Mrs. Westwood, afterwards driving her friends in a buggy in the midst of the mutineers. Mrs. Wagentreiber, wife of the Editor of the *Delhi Gazette*, drove the carriage containing her children, thus leaving her husband at liberty to fight his way with his revolvers. His is said to have shot four men dead and wounded many more. At Jhansi, young Mrs. Skene, a mere girl of two and twenty, but worthy of being a soldier's daughter and a soldier's wife, loaded for her husband and Captain Gordon as long as they were able to fire. The latter was shot through the head; whether, as was first reported, the young wife fell by the hand of him who loved her best, is uncertain, but they and their infant children lie in a bloody grave. The mutineers on leaving the house heard the



baby, sole survivor of this hapless family, crying, went back, and murdered it also. At Cawnpore Captain Thomson relates that at the most trying period of the defence "our heroic sisters did not all give themselves up to despair even yet; they handed round the ammunition, encouraged the men to the utmost, and in their tender solicitude and unremitting attention to the wounded, though all smeared with powder and covered with dirt, they were more to be admired then, than they had often been in far different costume, when arrayed for the glittering ball-room."

### Soldier's wife faces risks

The miseries to which women are exposed in war, and the danger of a man being diverted from his duty by anxiety for the safety of those dependant on him, have rendered it a question whether soldiers should marry. The gallant Major Hodson writes on this subject.

"Brigadier Grant, like dear Sir Henry Lawrence (though both married men themselves) says, that soldiers have no business to marry; under the idea that anxiety for their wives' welfare and safety, often induces men to hesitate to run risks which they would otherwise cheerfully undergo. I, on a less selfish principle, question very much whether men have any right to expose their wives to such misery and anxiety as during the last few months have fallen to the lot of so many and yet it seems hard to say that soldiers, who have so much to endure at times for the sake of others and of their common country, should be denied the happiness of married life, because times of danger will sometimes occur, and certain I am, that the love of a noble-hearted women nerves our arm to daring and honor. Happy however, is the woman whose husband is not a soldier."

Now that so many of our women have added fresh lustre to their country's name by patient courage and endurance, let, none other undertake the duties of a soldier's wife unless she feels capable of doing likewise, unless she can *in every case* consider her husband's duty as paramount to all other considerations, and encourage him to do it without a thought of his safety or of herself. A soldier is self-consecrated to his country, he has pledged himself to risk life and limb for the



common weal, he is not only bound to do so by the general laws of honor, but he has publicly professed his willingness to do so ; just as all men are bound to obey the law of God. We have the highest authority for likening the Christian life to that of the soldier. There is, first, *self-devotion* ;—"Because He laid down His life for us, we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." Secondly, *self-denial* ;—"Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Thirdly, *Readiness to obey* ;—"No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life ; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." A soldier must be ready to march at a moment's notice whithersoever his Commander orders. His life is thus an outward picture of the Christian character, and no woman should marry a soldier unless she feels sure that she will not hold him back from danger or duty ; and many have nobly fulfilled this condition under circumstances of the most appalling nature.

Many of our readers may have seen those touching letters from the lady of an Officer of Engineers in Futtehghurh. They may have wondered at the young wife, not yet three years married, writing to her beloved father and family with death staring her in the face.

#### Every thing left to His will

"Ere you get this we shall be delivered one way or another. *Should we be cut to pieces* you have, my precious parents, the knowledge that we go to be with Jesus, and can picture us happier and holier than in this distant land ; therefore why should you grieve for us." . . .

We are quite prepared for the worst, and feel that "to depart and be with Christ is far better." The flesh a little revolts from cold-blooded assassination, but God can make it bear up."

"I hope my precious family, you will not alarm yourselves about us ; we are in God's hands and feel very happy, *indeed we do.*"

After more than a week's suspense the poor young mother—then in the condition of all others to render her weak, nervous and incapable of flight—cannot restrain her anxiety for her eldest child ;—"I often wish our dear Mary was now in England, 'but God can take care of her too, or He will save her



from 'troubles to come by removing her to Himself.' Was there ever anything more touching than her expression of gratitude at being in the midst of this peril with her husband? *I am so thankful I came out to India to be a comfort to beloved John,* and a companion to one who has so given his heart to the Lord."

"And circumstances in which we have been placed during our sojourn in India have made the promises of God's Word so sweet and the consolations of religion so unspeakably great, besides endearing us to one another in a degree and way which a quiet English home might not have done."

Truly, though we would not have women exposed to danger, and that from considerations of more importance than mere life, though often even the best of wives may be a clog on her husband, yet on this path to martyrdom we cannot but say ;—"Happy John Monckton to have such a wife as this by thy side !"

#### **Brahman accomplice killed**

They shared the fate of the martyred American Missionaries of Futtehghur, being shot at Cawnpore. On the 12th June shortly after the siege had commenced, Dhokal Parshad, a Brahman of the highest character who accompanied them, perished with them, with his wife and four little children.

Their martyred blood and ashes sow  
O'er all the 'Indian' fields, that thence may grow  
A thousand-fold !

#### **New life of service for widows**

There are few more touching pictures than that of the bereaved widows at Lucknow seeking consolation, not in the indulgence of grief, but in active service in the hospitals. One of these, when for a time prevented from continuing her labor of love among the sick and wounded, is described as passing her days in a complete state of prostration and apathy, stretched in her easy chair, dumb and indifferent to everything around her, and as starting up with new life and vigor directly she was allowed to resume her beloved work. And little less admirable was the behaviour of another Chaplain's wife, whose spirits



were sustained by her husband's preservation, who, when forbidden to go backwards and forwards from the Residency to the Hospital "under fire each time," did indeed try to make herself useful acting as house-maid, "keeping the rooms tidy and clean," nursing the sick and wounded in the house, making flannel shirts for officers, a black dress for a newly made widow, acting as nurse to her friend's children, washing cups and saucers, cooking for invalids, and yet keeping a place in her affections for her "dear dog Bustle."

### 'Lucknow heroines'

Those who gazed on the mournful ceremony of the reception of the ladies from Lucknow ('the Lucknow Heroines' as they were somewhat styled) must remember the feeling of deep sympathy which pervaded every heart and every countenance. To some this sympathy was most justly due. It was enough to make the heart bleed to think of that delicate, fragile, newly-made widow, wandering in the jungle with her young children, lured onwards day by day by the hope of meeting with her husband, and so manifestly protected by the good hand of Him in whom she trusted, that when, on falling in with a party of rebel sowars she thought her hour was come, and taking one infant in her arms and other by the hand, she went towards them and only prayed that they would kill without torturing her and her children, even these men were awed, answered 'why should we kill you,' and left her unmolested. And so with the young mother watching for the arrival of her husband with Havelock's force, that she might show him his firstborn in the "clean frock she had saved" throughout the misery of the siege for this joyful occasion, and after two days of first joyful, then anxious expectation hearing that he had been shot down as he entered the Residency and then losing her boy after she had got him safe to Calcutta. But it is humbling to reflect that some of the Lucknow ladies have since been polking to the tune of "The Relief of Lucknow." The fact is great trials do not alter the character; they only manifest and to a certain degree modify it. Some fancy that all who have gone through a certain amount of suffering or danger, must necessarily be thereby so ennobled and purified as to be henceforward incapable of the ordinary weaknesses of humanity, and they are



not only grieved but astonished to hear of petty jealousies, little meannesses and spiteful gossiping among those who passed through some great ordeal together. It is taken for granted that a husband must be devotedly attached to a wife who has shared his captivity, that a widow must be heart-broken for the loss of a husband who was treacherously murdered, that one who has been severed by sudden and violent death from the one best loved, can never recover cheerfulness or open her heart to a fresh affection.

But the plain fact is that just as "cowards die many times before their deaths," because sensitive in the extreme to bodily fear, so some endure untold agonies of grief, horror, shame, and indignation from events which leave others almost untouched. And the finest natures are those most capable of suffering. The patriot's heart swells with irrepressible indignation when the craven tamely submits to the degradation of his country; the soldier burns with noble rage, when the clown in office serenely smiles; one heart is broken like a Venice glass, when another is of too coarse a material to be injured.

And so all are not heroes or heroines, who have passed through trial. Though all have been exposed to the same pitiless tempest, one will droop and die under the nearest hedge another will wing its way aloft like the eagle, and a third will flirt the rain drops off its wings, and twitter and chirp as merrily as if nothing had happened. And so we cannot boast that all or even most of the ladies in India are like the heroines and martyrs of Cawnpore and Lucknow.

### Indians hate European ladies' customs

One other subject cannot but be touched upon in speaking of intercourse with natives, and that is the necessity of the most scrupulous care on the part of our ladies that their good should not be evil spoken of. Few things make so strong an impression on the native mind as the sight of a European lady—moving freely among men, yet maintaining perfect propriety and modesty of demeanor. He can appreciate sense, judgment and capability of any kind, but it is new to him to find them in women. A native cannot enter into Wordsworth's description of

A perfect woman nobly planned  
To warn, to counsel, to command,



and the respect paid to women in European generally appears to him, as in the case of Lutfullah, as wonderful and unreasonable. Every English woman should consider that it is part of her mission in India to raise the native idea of her sex, and to do this she must most carefully abstain from whatever tends to lower it whether in dress or demeanor. The fashionable style of evening dress will ever be a scandal to natives. Is it too much to expect our ladies to protect themselves from misconstruction by some addition to their gala costume? Again dancing is looked upon as not only scandalous but menial. An English lady who respects herself, will never dance before a native; we would say, will never dance in India. It was but the other day that the Mahommedans of Bombay; in petitioning Government for the removal of their Kazi, complained above all that he is in the "habit of attending nautch parties and witnessing the dancing of immodest women," conduct which, in a person holding the high religious and judicial position of a Kazi, they allege to be *very sinful*. Surely what is sinful for a Mahommedan Judge cannot be decorous for a European lady.

### Prime instigator of the massacre

Then again the freedom of conversation and friendship which is innocent with a right-minded English gentleman; is most inexpedient and blameworthy with a man who neither fears God nor honors woman, and yet English ladies will often run after a self-styled distinguished foreigner, careless alike of his morals and his position among his own people. Captain Thomson, in describing the career of the *ci-devant* Khitmutghar, Azimullah of Cawnpore, speaks of the folly of some ladies (not to call it by a worse name) in mild but significant terms.

"I can easily imagine that the bare mention of his name will have power sufficient to cause some trepidation and alarm to a few of my fair readers; but I will betray no confidences. Read on, my lady, no names shall be divulged, only should some unpleasant recollections of our hero's fascination be called to mind, let them serve as a warning against the too confiding disposition which once betrayed you into a hasty admiration of this swarthy adventurer. Azimoolah was originally a khitmutghar (waiter at table) in some Anglo-Indian



family; profiting by the opportunity thus afforded him, he acquired a thorough acquaintance with the English and French languages, so as to be able to read and converse fluently, and write accurately in them both. He afterwards became a pupil, and subsequently a teacher, in the Cawnpore government school, and from the last-named position he was selected to become the vakeel, or prime agent, of the Nana. On account of his numerous qualifications he was deputed to visit England, and press upon the authorities in Leadenhall Street the application for the continuance of Bajee Rao's pension. Azimoolah accordingly reached London in the season of 1854. Passing himself off as an Indian prince, and being thoroughly furnished with ways and means, and having withal a most presentable contour, he obtained admission to distinguished society. In addition to the political business which he had in hand, he was at one time prosecuting a suit of his own of a more delicate character; but, happily for our fair country woman who was the object of his attentions, her friends interfered and saved her from becoming an item in the harem of this Mahomedan polygamist. Foiled in all his attempts to obtain the pension for his employer, he returned to India *via* France; and report says that he there renewed his endeavours to form an European alliance for his own individual benefit. I believe that Azimoolah took the way of Constantinople also on his homeward route. Howbeit this was just at the time when prospects were gloomy in the Crimea, and the opinion was actively promulgated throughout the continental nations that the struggle with Russia had crippled the resources, and humbled the high crest of England; and by some it was thought she would henceforth be scarcely able to hold her own against bolder and abler hands. Doubtless the wish was father to the thought. It is matter of notoriety that such vaticinations as these were at the period in question current from Calais to Cairo, and it is not unlikely that the poor comfort Azimoolah could give the Nana, in reporting on his unsuccessful journey, would be in some measure compensated for, by the tidings that the Feringhees were ruined, and that one decisive blow would destroy their yoke in the East. I believe that the mutiny had its origin in the diffusion of such statements at Delhi, Lucknow, and other teeming cities in India. Subtle, intriguing, politic,



unscrupulous, and bloodthirsty, sleek and wary as a tiger, this man betrayed no animosity to us until the outburst of the mutiny, and then he became the presiding genius in the assault on Cawnpore. I regret that his name does not appear, as it certainly ought to have done, upon the list of outlaws published by the Governor-General; for this Azimoolah was the actual murderer of our sisters and their babes. When Havelock's men cleared out Bithoor, they found most expressive traces of the success he had obtained in his ambitious pursuit of distinction in England, in the shape of letters from titled ladies couched in the terms of most courteous friendship. Little could they have suspected the true character of their honoured correspondent. Will Azimoolah betray his master into the hands of Lord Clyde, and, as the finishing stroke of his desperate cunning, pocket the reward of ten thousand pounds? That would be no unparalleled climax to a career so thoroughly Asiatic as his. Will he ever again be seen in London drawing-rooms, or cantering on Brighton Downs, the centre of an admiring bevy of English damsels? That would hardly comport with the most latitudinarian notions of propriety. Then let us point the moral, by warning Belgravia to be careful ere she adorns the drawing-room with Asiatic guests."

And again Captain Thomson says;—

"All accounts agree in the statement, that the feted, honoured guest of the London season of 1854, was the prime instigator in the most foul and bloody massacre of 1857."

### Story of Cawnpore

The "Story of Cawnpore" as it is the most recent, so it is one of the most interesting of the contributions to the history of the Mutiny. The warm-hearted tribute the author pays not only to his comrades but to the natives who were faithful to the ladies, to the gallant Civil Engineers, to the poor coachmaker, and to the stout-hearted Private's wife, awakens our liveliest sympathy not only with them but with himself. One person alone seems to have flinched under this fiery trial. The rest proved themselves a bond of heroes, unequalled by those who fell at Thermopylae, unsurpassed even by the defenders of Londonderry or Saragossa. But the heroism, the patience, the suffering fill us with stern admiration, not with astonishment. We have



a Spartan mother-country who expects everything from her children, and is rarely disappointed; but the blunders of those in authority were astounding. There was first the *neglect of warnings*.

"Day after day news came of the growth of the storm. Etawah and Allygurh, both towns between Delhi and Cawnpore, were plundered, and the insurgents were reported as *en route* for Cawnpore. The sergeant-major's wife of the 53d, an Eurasian by birth, went marketing to the native Bazaar, when she was accosted by a sepoy out of regimental dress,—“You will none of you come here much oftener; you will not be alive another week.” She reported her story at head-quarters, but it was thought advisable to discredit the tale. Several of us at this period endeavoured to persuade the ladies to leave the station and retreat to Calcutta for safety; but they unanimously declined to remove so long as General Wheeler retained his family with him.”

This obstinate refusal to take warning was, however, by no means peculiar to Sir Hugh Wheeler, but in this case this sad stupidity involved hundreds of helpless women and children in ruin.

The next great mistake was the choice of an utterly untenable position. The reason why, if a place of refuge was necessary, the best was not chosen, has never been given. Why Sir Hugh Wheeler, who appears to have begun his preparations, such as they were, on the 21st May, sixteen days before he entered the entrenchments, did not prepare to hold the Magazine, is incomprehensible. If it could not be held why was it not blown up, instead of being left to supply the mutineers with the very arms and ammunition which they used against us? “Thirty boat-loads ‘of shot and shell that were lying in the canal fell into their ‘hands, and the profusion of the material of war which they ‘obtained from the cantonments (where one magazine alone contained 200,000 lbs. of gunpowder, besides innumerable cartridges and percussion caps) furnished them with supplies amply ‘sufficient for a campaign.” Even the arrangements contemplated were not carried out. “The General gave ‘orders to lay in supplies for twenty-five days. Dall, ghee, ‘salt, rice, tea, sugar, rum, malt liquor, and hermetically ‘sealed provisions were ordered; but peas and flour formed ‘the bulk



of the food obtained. Either in consequence of the 'defection of the native agents who supplied the Commissariat, 'or because Sir Hugh Wheeler had only arranged for the support 'of the military at the station, the stock was ridiculously 'insufficient.' Surely in far less than sixteen days an ample store of provisions could have been laid in, but in more than one instance men in authority have preferred running the certain danger of being unprepared and unprovisioned, to the possible risk of existing suspicion?

Captain Thomson speaks of Sir Hugh Wheeler as "determined, self-possessed and fearless," and he was all these, yet we know that not he but his daughter Miss Wheeler took active part in the defence. He is said never but once to have gone out to the defences. It must be remembered he was 75 years old. The real leader was Captain Moore of M. M.'s 32d, whom Thomson speaks of as the life and soul of the defence.

When the General in command had done his worst, when upwards of one thousand Europeans, among whom were only three hundred trained soldiers, were crowded within those wretched entrench, then began that heroic defence, that depth of suffering, that silent endurance which ended in wholesale massacre, and has made the word Cawnpore a sound alike of pride and anguish to all.

### Strong women

During 21 days with scarcely any food, with no water but what was purchased at the price of blood, with no rest, surrounded by overwhelming numbers, with no intermission of attack, reduced to feed on a stray horse or dog, within relief, each man fought till he fell—most of the trained men having seven and eight muskets each. "All through 'this first weary day the shrieks of the women and chil'dren were terrific; as often as the balls struck the walls 'of the barracks their wailings were heart-rending, but after 'the initiation of that first day, they had learnt silence, 'and never uttered a sound except when groaning from the 'horrible mutilations they had to endure." Can any thing more vividly pourtray the horrors they underwent, than this silent strong patience on the part of the women!

Private and General shared alike; there was no hesitation in fulfilling the most hazardous duty; fifty-five Artillerymen out



of the fifty-nine perished in the batteries. Two pickets of sixteen men each held two unroofed barracks, and daily cleared the other barracks of the mutinous hordes who occupied them. "Three or four mothers had to undergo the sufferings of maternity in a crisis that left none of that hope and joy which 'compensate the hour of agony.'" Several persons became imbecile or raving mad. "And yet, looking back upon the horrible straits to which the women were driven, the maintenance of modesty and delicate feeling by them to the last, is one of the greatest marvels of the heart-rending memories of those 'twenty-one days.'"

At last when half rations for only four days remained, they agreed to depart. Captain Moore, who had not been very long in the country, could not appreciate the extent of mutineer's deceit and treachery. He received three hostages, and it is not clear why these men were not secured and forced on board the boats with the remnant of the heroic garrison. Then came the massacre, the glorious charge of the thirteen, and the rescue of the four survivors.

The loyal and hospitable Dirigbijah Sing has received some adequate acknowledgment of his services. But have Mowbray Thomson and Lieut. Delafosse received the Victoria Cross? What promotion or reward has been theirs? The Story of Cawnpore is incomplete until we know this.

### Horrible scenes

Other horrors were taking place outside the trenches at Cawnpore during the siege. On the 8th of June a lady and child, of whom not even the names were known, were seized and brought before the Nana and killed by his order. On the 10th, in the words of a native diary, "one lady, one grown up young lady and three children were coming along in a carriage from the West, and on the road some one had killed the lady's husband, but not considering it proper to kill women and children, had allowed them to escape. However the troopers of the 2nd Cavalry caught them, and the Nana ordered them to be killed at once; although the lady begged the Nana to spare her life, this disgraceful man would not hearken to her. At that time the sun was very hot and the lady said "take me to the shade," but no one listened; on four sides the children



were catching 'hold of their mother's gown and saying,—“Mamma come to the 'bungalow and give me some bread and water.” At length 'having tied them hand to hand and made them stand upon 'the plain, they were shot down by pistol bullets.” Another poor lady, the wife of a merchant who had for four or five days been hiding in the grass, came out on the 11th of June, and “the writer of this journal having gone in person, saw the head of that lady cut off and presented as a nuzir.”

Before his lamented death General Neill wrote that, having strong reason to believe that the Nawab of Furruckabad (whom we have just escorted to Aden!) had several English ladies in captivity, he threatened him with retaliation on his own women if a hair of their heads were touched—and that for this he was rebuked! He also mentioned that a mass of evidence had been collected regarding the victims of Cawnpore. Where is this evidence, and how is it that it has not yet been published?

Our French neighbours, who have been watching every turn and phase of the mutiny with the most lively, if not always the most friendly, interest, appears to have been struck not only with the heroism, but with the absence of all bravado and ostentation which has characterized the sufferers.

Another trait must appear equally remarkable to them, and that is the open confession of faith made by so many, not only of the women, but of the military. Old generals, men in the flower of their age, young lads entering into life, are not ashamed to profess their faith and trust in their Father which is in Heaven. Not only two forlorn ladies, languishing for months in the hands of their captors, are cheered by a passage in Isaiah; not only does the Missionary's wife profess her willingness to die if her death may but be more useful than her life to the cause of God; but the soldier going into action tells his wife that “his whole trust is in God and that he com'mits himself to his merciful hands,” and the wife adds “Love 'to God alone gives peace that cannot be taken away.” Imagine the amazement of a French official on finding such words at the end of a despatch! We have all heard of young Cheek encouraging the Native Missionary to hold fast his faith.

Before the remnant of the heroic garrison of Cawnpore were massacred, “Capt. Seppings asked to be allowed to read



prayers. "This poor indulgence was given;—they shook hands with one another, and the sepoys fired upon them." Previous to this, during the uninterrupted conflict in the trenches; "the Station-Chaplain, 'the Rev. Mr. Moncrieff, was most indefatigable in the performance of his ministry of mercy with the wounded and the dying. Public worship in any combined form was quite out of the question, but this devoted clergyman went from post to post reading prayers while we stood to arms. Short and interrupted as these services were, they proved an invaluable privilege," Ametia Hone the only woman and Captain Mowbray Thomson who wrote "The Story of Cawnpore" were the only two survivors of the massacre.

### Remembering the brave women

So long as we have gallant Officers as well as brave women we do not fear for India. One consideration forces itself on our minds in reading every narrative of the Rebellion, and that is how great have been the results from inadequate means, how small the results where the material for producing them has been abundant. The first turn of the tide was under the gallant Neil. He saved Benares and Allahabad. Then Havelock was led on from victory to victory against overwhelming odds; and even when reinforced by Outram the troops who saved Lucknow were utterly disproportioned to the work they performed. Delhi was taken by a force no larger than that which first sat down before its walls; and nothing comparable to these exploits has been done by the powerful armies and siege trains which subsequently took the field, as if to make it manifest to all that it is "not by might nor by power," but God alone who hath given us the victory. The role of our brave women had not been small in our splendid recovery. These heroines shall be ever remembered by a grateful nation.



## CHAPTER 10

# European Women Cause Racial Prejudices

T.G. GEORGE

Some of the several early European women who came to India wrote disparagingly about Indian society. Mrs. Kindersley (Letters from the East Indies), Mrs. Fenton (Memoirs and Journal), Mrs. Maria Graham (Journal of a Residence in India), Lady Nugent (Journal), Mrs. Fay (Letters from India) and some other 'memoirs', 'journals' and 'diaries' written by European women speak poorly of 'natives' and reveal racial prejudices of the writers. "When prejudices are caught up from bad passions, the worst of men feel intervals of remorse to soften and disperse them, but when they arise from a mistaken source, they are hugged to the bosom", observed Lord Erskine. How seeds of misunderstanding and mistrust between English people and Indians were sown by the early European women, with their superiority complex, is discussed in the following article. (Ed.)

It appears one of the unfortunate aspects of British connections with India, that the same cause which helped so powerfully to raise the standard of social morality among the English community in India, should have also served to widen the racial gulf between the English and the Indians. "Earth's noblest thing, a woman perfected," as Lowell puts it, came to contribute her powerful share in this racial handiwork"

"When a lady's in the case  
All other things give place."



says very humorously the poet Gay. It is also true of the experience of individuals as of communities. By a great irony of fate, the increase in the feminine element and influence had an effect in India which is removed from the ordinary. The dainty touch of women craftsmen imparted a rigid bent, a final form, to the social pattern that was being slowly shaped in the hitherto plastic racial mould. But for the considerable increase in the number of English ladies, it is very doubtful, judged by the events and tendencies of subsequent period during the 18th and 19th centuries, whether the two parties—the Englishmen and the Indians—would have fallen so hopelessly apart. The intrusion of this attractive element disturbed the placid surface of European social life somewhat violently and the ripple did not die out for a very very long time.

### Prejudices imported

For one thing, as the English women, as these “unmarried misses hoping to make hits” as Thomas Hood says, came in large numbers, they naturally imported with them what may be called in economic language, “invisible imports”—some of their current stock of prejudices which in the eighteenth century was by no means inconsiderable. Neither their loneliness, nor the occasional contacts with the people of the land, could wean them from some of their deeprooted or newly acquired prejudices. “Women like princes find few real friends”, said Lyttleton. In India, the English women found no friends at all among the natives. How far some of these ladies behaved like Mrs. Bennet, who according to Thomson’s ironic comments in “Pride and Prejudice,” “pricks up her ears, like a terrier scenting a rabbit, at the approach of a wealthy bachelor”, it is somewhat difficult to say. Sir Walter brings in the conditions of Anglo-Indian marriages in his novel “Surgeon’s Daughter.” Perhaps some of the readers would be curious to hear what this great novelist has to say on the matter. “The ships from Europe had but lately arrived and had brought over their usual cargo of boys longing to be commanders, and young women without any purpose of being married but whom a pious duty to some brother or some uncle or other male relative brought to India to keep his house, until they should find themselves unexpectedly in one of their own”.



**Scene completely changed**

"There is no better criterion of the refinement of a nation than the condition of the fair sex therein", says an English writer. Judged by that standard, the level of attainment of English society in India was in no way better than that of the contemporary Indian society. "Women can accomplish all, because they rule the persons who govern all," goes a French proverb. In India they certainly did succeed in governing the men with an iron hand in all matters regulating social conventions and etiquette. Even the dogmas of social life, faith, and conduct, were determined by the English wives. But the Englishman deserved such a precious blessing in the Indian "Inferno", to recompense him partly for the numerous hardships and annoyances with which he was plagued from the beginning. Thus women, "the fairest of creation, last and best of all God's work," came to contribute their powerful and decisive share in this racial temple which was being slowly raised in the tropics. When eventually it was completed, they became its most ardent and faithful priestesses. There is a very beautiful picture in "Divine Comedy" where Dante describes the spirit of Beatrice coming down from its blissful abode in Heaven to purify him and to make him fit for ascent to the higher heavens. In the Anglo-Indian purgatory the conditions were apparently somewhat different, and it may be mentioned without exaggeration that the Beatrices in India generally managed to drag down the English Dantes into the lower regions of prejudice and intolerance. It has been remarked about the mosquitoes that it is the female variety that is really keen on human blood, and more vicious than the male. The males live on rotten vegetable stuff. During the social conditions in the eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth century, this peculiarity in the conduct of the two varieties of mosquitoes was partly illustrated in the conduct of English residents in India. Till the arrival of English ladies in fairly large numbers, and even for a short time after their arrival, the Englishmen were content to accept the existing social conditions, and were fairly easy-going in the matter of their relations with the Indian women and men. But with the coming of English ladies on the stage, the scene completely changed. Whether it was that the English



women were colour-blind in the tropics then, or that they had too nice a perception of the beauties of the different shades, the brown tint has generally failed to meet with their approval in India. According to Victor Hugo, woman is "the enigma of the nineteenth century". She has been an enigma in India even earlier. There is a good deal of truth in the saying of Lamartine that "there is a woman at the beginning of all great things." Not infrequently there is also someone at the back of the small and some of the unhealthy things of social life. "Das Ewig-weibliche"—the eternal feminine—"doth draw us on,"—says Goethe, and in the English racial field they did drag the men a long way.

### Women—the test of civilisation

If "the test of a civilisation is the estimate of women," as George W. Curtis remarks, then one may try to arrive at some conception of the standard of culture and civilisation among the English ladies from whom the Englishmen in India gained their confirmed impressions of the colour prejudice which now forms the indispensable texture of their mental outlook. "If you should know the political and moral condition of a people ask as to the position of its women," says Alme-Martin. It is not only the level of Indian society which may be judged by this standard, as it has been done by Western writers but also the conditions of English society in India. If "the world is the book of women" and "whatever knowledge they may possess is more commonly acquired by observation than by reading," as Rousseau remarks, then the English women happened to find a good many mistakes in the book of Indian social world, if they ever cared to read it, while glancing through the editions of the numerous servants they engaged. For the vast majority however, the brown volumes have been always unattractive. The trouble in the Indian social conditions seems to have partly arisen from the following peculiarity which Bulwer-Lytton mentions: "A woman too often reasons from her heart; and hence two thirds of her mistakes and her troubles". Hence the trouble for the Englishmen in India, and also for the children of the soil, which they have to face for no fault of theirs.



### Racial mischief

With the absence of a wide culture or outlook, apparent also in the contemporary social life in England during this period, these women found society among their own people, or not infrequently, returned single and disconsolate to Europe, when the feeling of novelty and excitement or early enthusiasm had died out, or if their eager matrimonial quest failed. "Ah me, how weak a thing the heart of woman is", says Shakespeare. But the racial heart of most of them has been exceptionally strong in India. Whether it is that "Women have more heart and imagination than men", as Lamartine puts it, the English-women have maintained, and to a certain extent still maintain in many cases, a more unyielding attitude in the matter of racial relations. Perhaps some people might consider it rather unchivalrous to describe the character of women like this. But when one considers the racial mischief caused by the individual and corporate conduct of the English ladies during the course of the nineteenth century, one cannot be guilty of using very strong language.

### Regrettable influence

Their influence on the outlook of Englishmen here was regrettable in many ways. The gradual establishment of English homes in India, a thing in itself highly beneficial in many respects and also quite natural in place of the "zenanas" which were in fashion till then, had far-reaching consequences on social life. For one thing, this social fact rudely snapped all the old chains of tolerant intercourse which had existed till then. The habit of living in the oriental style and entering into temporary marriage connections—what the French would call "marriage de convenance" common till then, was abandoned with the appearance of women on the stage. While they slowly weaned the men from their old ways of living in an orientalised style, they nursed tenderly the new born racial infant with all the maternal affection generally lavished on it. Thus the English ladies powerfully reinforced and diverted the current racialism which was flowing unperceived in the Indian social meadows.

There was another general direction in which the influx of women affected unfavourably the situation. Previous to their arrival in large numbers, the English residents generally formed



no permanent social ties which bound them embarrassingly to the soil. But with the coming of ladies and the setting up of lasting domestic establishments, the anxieties and worries of a family life had their reaction on the outlook of the English community. Till now the gates of social intercourse were not rigidly closed. But when the English women came in considerable numbers they locked the doors and kept the key with them as mistress of the house. Previous to the appearance of ladies the freely Englishmen had entered into matrimonial connections with the Portuguese women. "As long as the Zenana lasted it was in its turn a powerful Indianising influence," remarks Mr. Spear correctly. In 1789, "Asiaticus" referring to the expenses of the seraglio. . . .for those whose rank in the service entitles them to princely income." Williamson and D'Oyley who describes the conditions prevailing during the last two decades of the eighteenth century, mention the "Zenana" has a normal institution. This identity of interests and familiar intercourse are revealed not only by such institutions like the "Zenana," but also by the limitation of other practices like hookah-smoking which became fashionable among the English settlers. It is evident even in the dress of the period. The English loved to see the animals fights, to watch the nautch dance, and had no objections to listening to eastern music. Bernier had found the Imperial band at Delhi trying at first, but had grown gradually to like it. "On my first arrival it struck me so as to be unsupportable, but such is the power of habit that this same habit is now heard by me with pleasure; in the night particularly when in bed and afar, on my terrace this music sounds in my ears as solemn, grand and melodious." But this experience appears to have been exceptional, for the English have not shown any capacity to appreciate Indian music and the experience or sensation which one of them described "that it reminded him of the Trumpet call on the Last Judgment Day, is not uncommon!" From the frequent references to the "Country music" in the earlier records, it is reasonable to infer that the merchants who came in the seventeenth and early part of the eighteenth centuries did not dislike Indian music.

#### New development

With the appearance of English ladies on the social stage,



the earlier cosmopolitan tastes and outlook suffered a perceptible change. This new development appears not to have escaped the attention of contemporary observers. In an anonymous work written during the period the prevalent feeling is very well reflected. "Every youth who is able to maintain a wife, marries. The conjugal pair becomes a bundle of English prejudices, and hate the country, the natives and everything belonging to them"—and as someone remarked, they become "good haters". "If the man has by chance a share of philosophy the woman is sure to have none." The "odious blacks," the "nasty wretches," the "filthy creatures" are the shrill echoes of the wife, for the "black brutes," the "black vermin," of the irate husband. "Not that the English behave with cruelty" continues this Anglo-Indian writer in an apologetic vein, "but they make no scruple of expressing their anger and their contempt by the most opprobrious epithets the language affords"—and in many cases, does not afford! "Those specially who while young, are thrown much among natives, become haughty, overbearing, and demi-Asiatic in their manners"—again the influence of the distorting Asiatic environment! The writer whose words have been quoted just now has taken shelter under the veil of anonymity. Sir Walter Scott has some amusing references to the type of English women who proceeded to India during the eighteenth century. "There are some women in the world that can bear their share in the bustling life that we live in India—ay, and I have known some of them drag forward their husbands, that would have otherwise stuck fast in the mud till the day of judgment. Heaven knows how they paid the turn-pikes they pushed their husbands through". (Surgeon's Daughter). If they dragged their husbands and other men from the stagnant administrative and social pool, they certainly landed some of them in the racial quagmire.

### Intolerant attitude

"Men make laws, women make manners", says one writer. In India while the Englishman was busy framing the laws for India's government, the women were engaged in drafting the rules of social code which have been guiding their lordly individual and corporate conduct.



This intolerant attitude, precipitated by the increase in the number of women, is faithfully mirrored in the "Memoirs" of Mrs. Fenton, written during the third decade of the nineteenth century. Thus the appearance of English women closed for ever the pleasant avenues of social intercourse, and from that time onwards the two communities went slowly on their separate ways without even a casual attempt at acquaintance, except in a few rare cases, and ever since the Englishman in his galligaskins had very often nothing but contempt for the Indian in his "dhoti".

### **Seeds of misunderstanding and distrust**

As has been pointed out in this connection by Mr. Spear, who commenting on the reaction on the social outlook by the growth in the number of English women, says: "The tragedy here again lay not with the abolition of the Zenana, a rotten system based neither on justice, nor on mutual self-respect, but in the growth of the herd psychology, and an intenser race consciousness." Generally individuals by themselves cannot be race-conscious, even if they wanted to; but a group of individuals, as soon as they become conscious of their corporate interest, tend to glorify themselves, if only as an act of protection of their self-respect against other and larger groups. This mob psychology tends to betray itself in all similar circumstances. However the fact remains that the observations, comments and vituperative writings of lady residents and of other writers served more to diminish the possibilities of a friendly contact, than to draw nearer the bonds of understanding and tolerance between English and Indians. Instances can also be multiplied to show that the discerning English people were not utterly behind to the finer qualities of Indian character and that there were other hues beside the darksome dye in which it has been painted by literary artists of the type of Macaulay and Ruskin during the nineteenth century. About the present performances of journalists and politicians it is better not to comment at all. Mischievous remarks (such as of the early European women in India) served to scatter widely the seeds of misunderstanding and distrust which later on produce an abundantly vicious crop.



## CHAPTER 11

# Impact of European Women on Indian Society

AMRIT KAUR

When Europeans first landed in India, the condition of Indian women was at the lowest ebb. The Europeans brought with them and exhibited customs of a permissive society i.e. ball room dancing, frank and open meeting of members of both sexes, drinking, widow re-marriage etc. To these were added horse races, tennis, hunting and riding in which both men and women participated. Apart from ameliorating the condition of Indian women through laws, which the British rulers enacted, the life style of their women had an imperceptible but significant impact on changing the feminine customs and culture in India. Albuquerque abolished *sati* by law in the Portuguese territories in India and later William Bentinck stopped it in British India. It was however left to some dedicated European ladies like Flora Annie Steel, Lady Dufferin, Annie Besant, Margaret Cousins, Mira Behn, Lady Mountbatten, Mother Teresa and others to uplift womanhood with their devotion and selfless work in India. (Ed.)

It is said : "If a person who died a hundred years ago came to life to-day, the first and most important change that would strike him is the revolution in the position of women in modern India." What was the position of Indian women before this and what were the factors which contributed to bring this change in the position of women in India, is a subject worth studying. Arrival of European women in India and their life style was



surely an important factor to bring this great change.

### **Position before Europeans' advent**

The Europeans arrived in India at a time when the Indian woman after enjoying the glorious esteem during ancient period has sunk to the worst position in the history of this country. "When the Indians came in vital contact with the British in the latter half of the 18th century," writes Neera Desai, "the position of the Indian women had reached the maximum degree of deterioration. Ideologically woman was considered a complete inferior species, inferior to the male, having no significance, no personality ; socially she was kept in a state of utter subjection, denied any right, suppressed and oppressed. She was further branded as basically lacking an ethical fibre." The writer adds : "The patriarchal joint family, the customs of polygyny and its concomitant koolinism, the purdah, the property structure, early marriage, self immolation of widows (sati) or a state of permanent widow-hood, all these contributed to the smothering of the free development of woman". She was denied independent personality. Her life was to be associated with and subordinated to either the father, the husband or the son. The then prevailing conception of woman whether Hindu or Muslim remained basically feudal in character inspite of spread of the *Bhakti* movement which aimed at elevating the status of woman, and had then spread in several parts of this country.

### **European women bring Western life-style**

With a cloistered and narrow outlook, Indians did not like, in the beginning, the European ladies moving freely among men. Initially, they disliked their dress, demeanor, habits, customs and open-air living style but as their contacts developed and later when the British became the rulers, many Indians naturally began admiring the rulers' religion, society, women and customs. A number of them became christians and started following Western manners and etiquettes especially the Anglo-Indian section. Although majority of the British women by and large kept themselves strictly within the bounds of Western civilisation, some of them in the role of benevolent social guides, teachers, doctors and missionaries cast a perceptible impact on the thinking and lives of the Indian women.



### **Pioneer in female education**

Every year English women came to India to seek and secure wealthy husbands for themselves and for the sake of adventure and experience. Among them were also single career women like Annette Ackroyd (who started first girls school in Calcutta), taking an active interest in bringing modernity to India by working as doctors, teachers, nurses and social reformers. Flora Annie Steel, wife of a covenanted I.C.S. for instance, was devoted to the education of Indian female. While at Kasur she managed to set up a municipal school for little girls inspite of strong aversion to female education by the Indians in 1860s. Due to her zeal and keen interest in the female education she was made 'Inspectress of Female Schools'. Her work extended to a large area from Delhi to Peshawar. She became the first woman member of the Punjabi Education Board.

### **Medical aid to Indian women**

Lady Dufferin, wife of the Viceroy Earl of Dufferin, arrived in India on 13 December, 1884. While at Simla she started her ambitious scheme, called, 'The Countess of Dufferin's Fund for Supplying Medical Aid to the Women of India'. In the following year she laid the foundation stone for the first "Dufferin Female Hospital for the Training of Women Doctors" in Darbhanga. The Scheme gathered momentum when due to the efforts of Dr. Miss Edith Brown, the first 'North India School of Medicine for Christian Women' with an attached hospital opened in November 1894 in Ludhiana. Physical healing was considered the best way to win the people's hearts. Before leaving India in December 1888, Lady Dufferin established 'The Lady Dufferin Zenana Hospital' in Calcutta.

### **A great European lady**

Annie Besant daughter of William Page Wood—half Irish and half English—came to India on 16 November 1893 and established her home in Banaras. In 1898 she established central Hindu College at Banaras. This became one of the great educational institutions of the time and formed the nucleus of the Banaras Hindu University. In 1907 she was elected President of the Theosophical Society. On 1 September, 1916 'The Home Rule League' was started by her which was a forerunner for the



demand of Indian Independence. She was made the President of the Calcutta Session of the Indian National Congress. In 1917 she established the Indian Scouts Association, and was latter made Honorary Commissioner for India. In 1932 she was awarded the Order of the Silver Wolf, the greatest honour that the Scout Movement could offer. Her noteworthy contribution for education was continuing. In 1915 she established the National College at Madanpalle in South India. In 1917 she started 'The Society for the Promotion of National Education'. In 1918 the National University was established by her at Adyar in South India.

#### **Founder of All India Women's Conference**

Mrs. Margaret Cousins was born in 1878 in Ireland of Irish parents. Since 1915, she made India her home and her country. Her husband, Dr. James Cousins was a poet, artist and author. Both came to India at the call of Mrs. Annie Besant.

"With my first year of landing on Indian soil, I was dedicated to the service of India i.e. service to that half of India—its womanhood. . . ." says Margaret. It was she who started the Woman Indian Association in 1917 and this was the forerunner of the All India Women's Conference. It was the ceaseless efforts of Mrs. Cousins, which gave the lead, by granting the Franchise, and the right of representation to the women of Madras in 1925 followed by Bombay in 1927 and other provinces later.

Constantly travelling, lecturing and writing to rouse the Indian woman from her age-old lethargy, she advocated the national spirit and Indian culture wherever she went. Besides several other achievements, she was also the General Secretary and later in 1936 the President of All India Womens' Conference which has now a large membership spreading over all places in India.

#### **European women help Indian woman regain her lost entity**

Indian women owe a great debt of gratitude to this intrepid woman pioneer, a staunch believer in women's rights from her early youth who gave her all to the cause of Indian womanhood. We, the Indian women, are also indebted to all those European sisters who worked here for the uplift of Indian women through modern education and social reforms. It has considerably influenced our thinking, outlook and progress. Indian woman having regained her lost entity, is now on its forward march.



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